Anarchism

Anarchism begins from the central insight that social hierarchies are unnecessary and, therefore, oppressive. In place of the systemic violence of power, anarchism seeks instead to expand upon the combined ideals of freedom coupled with equality.

Against the centralisation and violence of the State, anarchism proposes the full decentralisation of the political and the economic, the destruction of national borders, and the horizontal organisation of life from the smallest to the largest, from the simplest to the most complex. Against wage slavery and poverty, anarchism seeks the full socialisation of property, shared and worked in common to directly meet the needs of people. And in rejecting hierarchies of identity — sexual, racial, ethnic, or otherwise — anarchism seeks an expansive and thoroughgoing egalitarianism.

Decentralisation, free association, and mutual aid — such are the key concepts of anarchism.



imminent rebellion 9

hand bound with a **hatred** of the State infused into every page

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t.b., suitcases, frogs and dogs – my 15th October 2007 | 4
ballad of an ungrateful immigrant | 13
the Tongan riots | 14
know your rights, these are your rights | 30
operation 8 – how the police watched us | 36
fuck me like the whore I am | 46
from the streets to the cells and back again | 52
a critique of NGOism | 56
lake Waikaremoana – back in Tūhoe hands | 68
for revolutionary struggle not activism | 74
why is it so hard to support survivors? | 79
towards an anarcho-design practice | 84
behind German borders | 91
dangerous foundations: an argument against the Identity in Identity Politics | 98
letters | 107

An irregular anarchist journal from deep in the South Pacific.

A politics that refuses to reduce the complexity of life to the singular logic of the State cannot be simple, cannot be the domain of easy slogans. Nor can an ***anarchist politics*** ever make the risk of believing it has achieved a finality, even if only theoretical. This journal is therefore not propaganda, but a genuine attempt to articulate an anarchist practice and theory, one whose articulation cannot have an end.


ETEND
LIBERTIES
UNCONDITIONAL LOVE
UNCONDITIONAL SOLIDARITY
UNCONDITIONAL FREEDOM
A

I remember hearing birds sing that morning, Tui and others. I was just waking up in a tent in Wellington's town belt when I heard people yelling and screaming. What's going on? Are they just on their way home after a wild night out and stumbled across my girlfriend's home? Then torch light on the tent. "Get out of the tent! Get the fuck out of that tent!"

TB, Suitcases, Frogs, and Dogs

My 15th October 2007

Smush

I was naked and scared. "I'm just putting some clothes..." "Get out of the fucking tent! Hands in the air!" I put on a singlet and some undies and pants, kissed Em and stepped out of the tent. Cops all around me. One was standing right in front of me pointing his big gun right in my face. He was wearing all black, balaclava, yelling at me. "Put your hands in the air! Get the fuck on the ground! Get on the ground!!!" I lay down. Face in the muddy earth. "Put your hands on your back!" He handcuffed me. A police dog was right in my face. Em had gotten out of the tent and was lying on the ground not far from me with a cop sitting on her back. He was hurting her hand. I yelled out to her: "You know your rights, aye?" "Shut the fuck up!" (That was the cop.)

Probably around 10 members of the 'Armed Offenders Squad,' a unit which "provides Police with the means of effectively and more safely responding to and resolving situations in which there is an actual or threatened use of firearms or other weapons against members of the public or Police" had surrounded the tent. Their guns, it turns out, were Bushmaster XM15 M4A3; a military-style weapon which can either be semi- or fully-automatic. These cops were positioned all around the tent. Some got lost in the bush and only found their way to the tent after a few minutes.

After being hand-cuffed, plain clothes cops started to appear. They were wearing bullet proof vests over their tie and shirt. I was taken up to Aro School, shivering from being cold and scared. I asked for my jersey and the cops put it over my shoulders and then placed me in an unmarked police car. Detective Robin Hutton placed me under arrest. Two other cops were in the car. They put on dust masks, saying that I had been staying with someone who has TB and that I might be contagious. "Were you aware that the person you were staying with has TB, Urs?" I didn't even look at him.

Cop Shop – the heart of the beast

The car drove off to the Wellington Central Police Station, avoiding Abel Smith Street (where our activist community centre was being raided). I've been processed at that police station four times before after being arrested at protests and have waited for my comrades to be released outside the station countless times. But it was the first time I was taken to an interview/interrogation room.

My arresting officer read out six charges for 'possession of weapons' and one for 'participating in a terrorist group' and wanted to know what I had to say. "Look, Urs, I'm sure you have lots of questions as to why you are here and we, too, have many questions." "I don't have any questions whatsoever and I'm not going to answer any of your questions." That was it – end of interview! I couldn't believe it. While driving down to the police station I got myself mentally prepared for the interrogation. 'What tactics will they use? Good cop – bad cop, like on TV? Telling me that Emily had told them 'everything'? Offering me a deal? Threatening me with Guantánamo or beating the shit out of me?' Well, I was ready for anything really. But no, a lame attempt of confusion: the TB story which I guess was supposed to scare me – ie. 'Do we have enough face masks for all the people in the court room later this afternoon?' (I should mention that I did not get to see a doctor in the three and a half weeks I spent in jail following my arrest – TB my arse!), a really lame offer of cooperation ('I'm sure you have lots of questions') and another go on the way to the holding cells ('We have some tapes we would like you to listen to so you get an idea what this investigation is about. Would you like to listen to them?' 'No' – is what I said; 'Get fucked' – is what I thought. They knew.).

After the failed interview, I was charged with six counts of possession of weapons which took forever because the cop had to write everything down. They didn't charge me with 'participating in a terrorist group' which is section 13 of the 'Terrorism Suppression Act' (TSA) passed by parliament in 2002. At the time I didn't know that the police need consent of the Attorney-General to prosecute me under the TSA. I was confused to say the least.

I rang a couple of our activist lawyers. One was down there in no time and, wearing a dust-mask, joined me and the two cops who tried to interrogate me. So from then on he did the talking: "My client is not making a statement" and "no, my client does

not want to give you a DNA sample." After being photographed, the arresting officer took me down to the holding cells where I was finger-printed, stripped and given a blue rad suit (with hood) instead and put in the big holding cell. Toilet time, just so I could go for a walk and see if Em is around. Instead I saw Ira, Em's brother, in another cell and, while being processed, Val – another Wellington anarchist – walked passed. The cops said we will appear in court at 2pm so they drove me down there in an un-marked car. The capitalist media was down there already, of course, and as we were waiting for the garage door to open, cameras surrounded the car. I tried to hide my face and Hutton said: "I'm really sorry about this, Urs." Fuck you!

Court appearance No.1 – removing frogs

We appeared in the Wellington District Court that same afternoon. News was coming in from raids across the country. Ruatoki, a small Tūhoe community at the foot of the Urewera forest, had been blockaded by armed police and every car was stopped and searched. Arrests were reported in Auckland, Hamilton, Whakatane, Ruatoki, Palmerston North and us in Wellington. My lawyer said we should try and get bail straight away while the other lawyers weren't so keen. Us four activists decided to make a collective decision: we'll make a bail application later that week.

The court room was packed with our friends; everybody looking confused and concerned. 'What the fuck is going on here?' My friends' kid was in the court room, too. "Hi Urs" he yelled out. "Remove that child" – the immediate response from the judge. "Love you frog!" I can't remember exactly what happened in court, and that would happen to me over and over again: I was too busy looking at all my friends and comrades in the dock and court room.

Ira and I were then taken to Rimutaka Prison in Upper Hutt while the two womyn were taken to Arohata Women's Prison in Tawa. That was the start of 26 days of incarceration.

The court room was packed with our friends; **everybody looking confused and concerned.** 'What the fuck is going on here?'

Rimutaka Prison – Terri the Terrorist

When walking into our new home, HM2 at Rimutaka, late on 15th October, the other prisoners already knew who we were. Here are the terrorists, here comes Greenpeace.

Between 40 and 60 prisoners live in one unit, usually sharing a cell. During the day, we'd get two hours in the wing and two in the yard. Twenty long hours are spent in your cell. The wing had a pool table, a public phone and a few tables and chairs. The yard is best described as a cage; sort of 20 meters long and 8 wide. We played rugby, touch and basketball.

We spent our yard and wing time with the same people. The other 12 were all members of the Mongrel Mob. (Unlike the prison in Auckland, gang members are separated at Rimutaka.) They were nice guys, looking after us and giving us new nicknames. Three Nazi-skins were in the same unit as us and abused us verbally. "Greenpeace sucks!" – uhm, yes, I agree. But we never spent any time with them (lucky for them; the Mobsters would have given them the bash!).

It took a few days to work out how this shithole works. Filling out form after form, getting used to things taking forever (or never taking place) etc. On Thursday, after only four days, I had my first visit which was fantastic! Over the next three weeks, the visits along with the letters and messages of solidarity and support from Aotearoa and across the world is what kept me going.

The move to Auckland came unexpected. I had another court case in Wellington relating to a protest in 2006 and thought I'd stay around for that. But no, we were bussed across the North Island after one and a half weeks.

On Thursday morning of the second week, we were woken up early and then taken to the RO (Receiving Office). I gave one of my most brilliant speeches ever which got around five guards staring at me in silence: "Three things. Firstly, what you are doing right now is illegal. Moving us to Auckland



is illegal under your own laws given that the alleged crime did not happen there nor am I from there. I do NOT consent to being moved to Auckland. Secondly, we are having a High Court hearing to challenge the move to Auckland. Thirdly, I will appear in the Wellington District Court before the court appearance in Auckland." Or something like that. I boarded the bus feeling good.

That bus ride was probably one of the most humiliating experiences in this whole saga. We sat in tiny individual cages with cameras pointed at us. I was cold and, well, not exactly comfy. At least we stopped at some interesting sites. It makes a trip so much more 'fun' when, instead of stopping at the Levin playground (which has a giant hamster wheel) and getting Fish'n'Chips in Taupo, you get to check out Linton Prison, Rangipo Prison (our lunch stop – cup of tea and three sandwiches) and Waikeria Prison.

A.C.R.(a).P. – Maoist prison guards and suitcase murderers

Auckland was different. Wing time was all day, from 7.30am to 5.30pm. And the time in the wing was spent with around 50 other prisoners. After spending our first night in unit Foxtrot, we were moved the following morning after concerns for our safety in that unit. So we ended up in Echo for two weeks.

Some of the people I met there: the suitcase murderers (they were actually called 'Suitcase 1, 2 and 3' – number 4 ended up, chopped up, in the suitcase); a guy who chopped his wife's head off with an axe when he found her in bed with someone else; 'Dog Dog,' a Mongrel Mobster from Dog town (aka Waipawa) who talked about the Mob all day; Luis who was on bail for dealing pot but was arrested for breaching his bail conditions (24 hour curfew) because he went to work (he is a baker). "How can I pay the bills and buy food for my kids? Where should I get the money from?"

There was a Maoist prison guard – not joking! I was called in to the Principal Corrections Officer's office one day for a security assessment. We talked about the books I was reading (books about the Wobblies, Angela Davis and the Paris Commune) and he said: "Well, I need to make sure then that you don't steal my



badges behind you on the wall." I turned around and there were badges of Lenin and Mao on the wall and above the door. I cracked up laughing.

And there was Nik, Assole and TJ – the Monopoly posse. We would play several games a day. The bank usually lost. I developed a polygraphic theory: if they don't crack after being challenged the third time, they usually tell the truth. An example: "You landed on Queen Street!" "No I didn't! I had a six." "No you didn't, you had a five. You owe me $2000!" "No, I don't. I got a six." "Liar, you had a five." "Ah yeah, true, I did." I hope that's not how they talk when being interrogated by the cops.

And of course Tūhoe freedom fighter Tame Iti.

Rights or Liberation – The politics of it all

Here is what I wrote to the anarchist and activist community of Wellington while I was inside:

"I need to be quite frank here as I rather create debate than falling in a trap of not communicating or misunderstandings. Anything I say in this paragraph does not go against what I wrote [earlier on]; I'm truly thankful to everybody who is standing up right now – too much!

"I do not think that what happened on 15th Oct. has to do with 'Civil Rights.' The police actions of that day have targeted a particular tribe in Aotearoa, Tūhoe, as well as people active in various activist groups who, more or less, identify as anarchists (or libertarian communists or anarcha-feminists etc.). As an anarchist, the state is not something I look to for protection; it is not an institution that in my opinion will do anything for the struggle against 'capitalist-colonialist-patriarchy' – in fact, the opposite is true! The state's 'justice' system, police force and armies are protecting the interests of the ruling class, not the indigenous peoples, not the anarchists, not the workers, not womyn, not the environment.

"Therefore, I don't want rights, I want liberation!

"So now you might say/think 'ah, he's just a mad anarchist and I simply don't agree with his politics!' – sweet, all good. Having different ideas around social organisation is a challenge every movement faces. And the last thing I want is for you to leave this movement that's emerging! :-) So what am I suggesting? I propose that we shift our collective focus away from the 'Rights,' the 'Legislations' and 'Acts' and instead look at what these recent attacks by the state are really about: Te Manamotuhake ō Tūhoe!

[…]

"Freedom for all political prisoners around the world! Free Mumia Abu Jamal! Free Marco Camenisch! Free Leonard Peltier! Free Tame Iti!

"Solidarity with all the people around the world – Burma, Oaxaca, Tonga, Tūhoe – who are experiencing the vicious brutality of the state.

"Solidarity with workers who have recently been on strike on the trains in France and the port of Auckland!

"Get behind Te Mana Motuhake o Tūhoe!"

I think this pretty much sums it up and is of course still true now, five months after the raids.

Almost certainly not the last time…

I don't know if we were the first anarchists to go to prison in Aotearoa – I doubt it. Tom Barker, a member of the 'Industrial Workers of the World' spent months in jail in 1913/14 for his involvement in the Great Strike for allegedly giving 'one of the most seditious speeches of all time' (whether he was an anarchist at the time, I'm not certain). What I do think is that this almost certainly was not the last time anarchists spend time in prison in this country. We are arrested for our ideas – for the thoughts of a free society, libertarian communism – and/or for our action – direct action – and involvement in various movements in the struggle for social revolution.

As a comrade of mine put it: "We have to get used to the idea that we are criminals." The system will portray us as violent and mad extremists without any friends. The governmental and capitalist propaganda apparatus will try to convince people that there is no point in even looking at different ways of organising society. But it doesn't matter to us if a system that is the antithesis of what we struggle for calls us criminals and terrorists.

Hongihongi te whewheia

Not a lot has changed really since October 15th. Yes, we now know for sure that the police and the SIS are after us (all of us!). But then, it would have been naive to think otherwise.

However, we need to learn. In Māori, there is a saying "Hongihongi te whewheia" – "Know your enemy" (a 'hongi' being a 'nose kiss'). We need to know how the forces of the state think and operate. As it turns out, for example, they don't hunt freedom fighters down with tasers…

In the electronic times we live in, surveillance has become a whole heap easier. We can be sure that cars are bugged, phones are tapped, txts and emails read and bank accounts monitored. However, the biggest source of information for the oppressive forces are people who don't understand or ignore the basic principle of the struggle: solidarity! If you talk to the cops, you are compromising the freedom of yourself and others. And it is so simple – don't talk to the cops! It doesn't matter how guilty or innocent you are; it doesn't matter whether the charge is 'obstruction' (an activist 'favourite') or 'committing a terrorist act' (a less preferred charge); it doesn't matter whether you are in an interrogation room with 15 cops or just at a demo with 15 people (and one cop); don't talk to the cops (about anything)!

From their statements in the capitalist media, we know that Chris Trotter and Bommer Bradbury are certainly not on our side (well, this writer was certain about Trotter for 'some' time). However, we also had to find out that people who we considered our comrades preferred to co-operate with the cops than with the people who were sitting in jail.

Other things to learn from are the practicalities of supporting people in prison, forming a support and resistance movement in the aftermath of the state's attacks, dealing with the capitalist media etc.



Where to from here?

My mother asked me recently: "Do anarchists always have to fight? Can't they just take it easy?" I wish we could. But I call myself an anarchist – and please, you should too. I'm sick of descriptions like 'musician, peace activist, pacifist, Swiss, environmentalist' (although some of these labels are true) – and as an anarchist, I want to know nothing but the struggle for freedom. I want to fight with my comrades for libertarian communism, for the destruction of colonialist-capitalist-patriarchy! So for all those who thought that the raids on our communities, the arrests and time in jail have changed my opinion of the state, think again.

Here are some things that I think, in no particular order, need to happen at the moment:

1. Build on the relationships formed in the aftermath of the raids

For the moment, this will mainly be happening through the court case which will bring everybody together. A solidarity campaign around the court appearances in Auckland with protests and marches will not only help the people facing the charges, but it also creates space for different groups and communities to meet, exchange ideas and a chance to build personal relationships.

2. Support Tino Rangatiratanga and Te Mana Motuhake ō Tūhoe

Educating pakeha on colonisation, learning what role the state plays in oppressing indigenous people to this day and actively support the indigenous liberation struggle.

3. Talk and write! We need to get our ideas out there

I think, that in times of weak urban activist movements, we need to do a lot of talking and writing. There is a real danger of propaganda work becoming an activity of 'specialists' only. But we are all writers and/or talkers!

4. Form affinity groups to do what needs to be done

Well, that's an obvious one. It's time to fight back!

5. Create, maintain and defend autonomous and radical spaces/centres for political organising

The existence of radical social centres provides our movement with important infrastructure to plan, meet and make resources for various progressive movements and initiatives.

6. Deepen our collective understanding of class, racism, the patriarchy and colonisation and resistance to this oppression

The time for resistance is now. Ⓐ

Ballad of an Ungrateful Immigrant

– Nausea Nissenbaum

So… what're you getting for your birthday?

He laughs at the joke I don't get
Coz yesterday in economics class
He learned just what percent of Jewish girls
Want nose jobs for their sweet sixteens.

And every time I walk past
These boys yell out, 'hey Moses,'
Like it's the worst insult they could dream up
And I wonder how do they know?
When my eyes are blue like theirs
And my hair is light like theirs
And my skin my skin is whiter than theirs
That pale Polish complexion so unsuited to this ozone free climate.

But something gives me away
Coz my nose is all wrong
And my lips - they are fish lips - that same boy tells me.

So I wear a silver star around my neck
Like a big fuck you to their wholesome Anglo paradise
And every time a teacher stops me to talk about uniform regulations
I talk back
I talk about pogroms,
I talk about Jews taking communion and spitting it right back out,
I talk about Jews burnt at the stake and
Jews burnt in ovens
And after all that do you really think a detention's gonna scare me?

And when I talk, they listen
They listen, and they shut up, and they back off
Like the intensity in my eyes and the quivering in my voice
Is a knife that might start slashing
At their Anglo-Celtic-Saxon white white white reality.

In social studies we learn about the holocaust
My grandma's existence on display for these
Wide eyed blonde teenagers
Who stare and whisper as I bite my lip to dam the tears

Tears which burst out later, in drama,
When Wayne Lancaster tells the class how Hitler is his idol
And the AP apologises to me after my mum complains coz
Wayne's entitled to his opinion
But he needs to understand, you can't
say things like that in front of Jewish people.

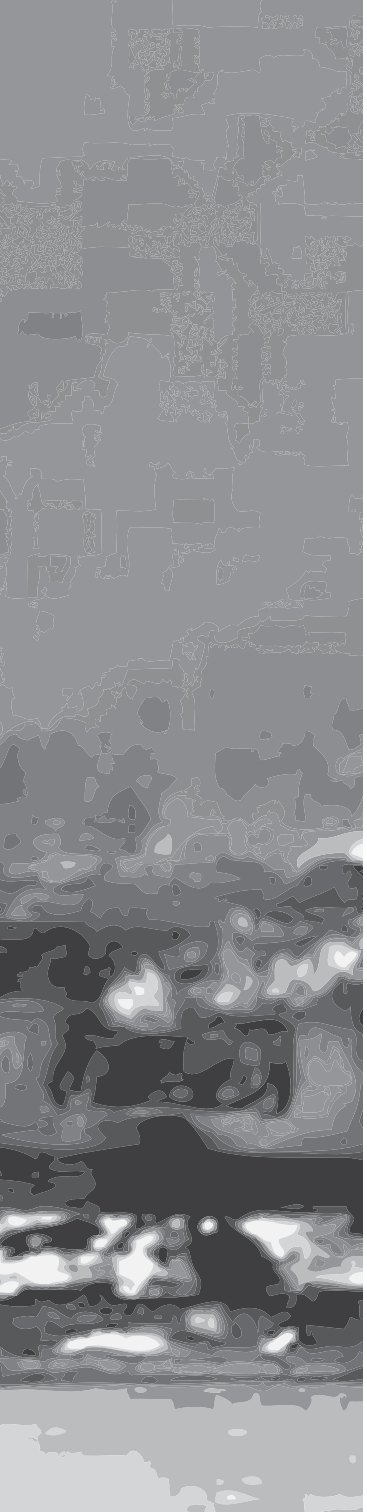
Of course, most people are nicer
They tell me all about their granddads who fought in World War Two
Like they were fighting for my freedom and I should be grateful
except that my grandad also fought in World War Two
And when it ended he had no home to go back to.

So all I can say is, fuck you New Zealand
Yeah, I'll take your passport
I'll take your dole payments
But your smug gentile pity
Your churches on every corner
And your Christmas lights in every park
That you can shove up your touchas.

The Tongan Riots

– Fydd





"If a boat ends up on a reef
you don't blame the reef;
you don't blame the boat;
you don't blame the **wind;**
you don't *blame* the waves;
you blame the **captain.**"

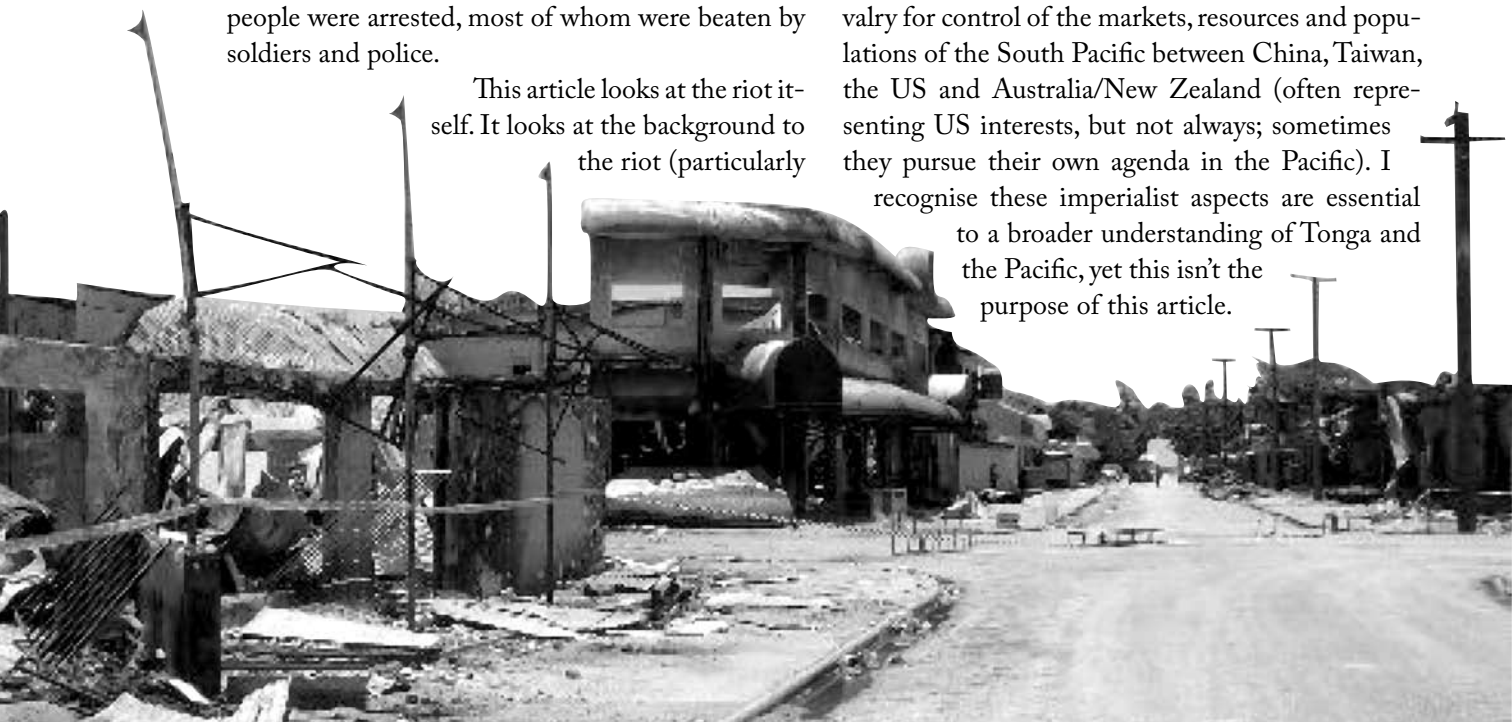
– Tongan Saying

On Thursday 16 November 2006, riots erupted in Nuku'alofa, the capital of the tiny kingdom of Tonga. Tonga is an archipelago of 170 islands in the South Pacific, about 3,000 km northeast of Sydney and 2,000 km northeast of New Zealand/Aotearoa. After a pro-democracy march ended outside parliament, an irate crowd of possibly 2,000-3,000 took to the streets. As they rampaged through town, they tipped over cars, attacked government buildings, smashed windows, looted businesses and then set them alight. Many people who weren't at the demonstration joined the riot. Amidst the stores, offices and hotels engulfed in flames, the looting gleefully continued. Beaming youngsters darted in and out of stores laden with looted boxes and sacks of goods as blinding waves of fire fell onto the road. For many Tongans, it was like a Christmas give-away bonanza that had come early. By the night's end, the mob had burnt down a remarkable 80% of the Central Business District of Nuku'alofa. Six people were dead, and millions of Pa'anga (the currency of Tonga) damage had been done.

Police stood by, powerless. The cops even asked looters for candles because of a power blackout! However, as the flames became too intense, the looters dispersed, and the government slowly regained control. The government granted itself tough emergency powers. The CBD was cordoned off. Armed cops and soldiers from the Tongan Defence Force patrolled the streets, indiscriminately arresting youth. The Tongan government, fearing that it was facing a revolution, quickly requested armed assistance from Australia and New Zealand to quell its unruly subjects. And so over 150 Australian and New Zealand troops and cops were flown in by their respective governments. After a few weeks, over 570 people were arrested, most of whom were beaten by soldiers and police.

This article looks at the riot itself. It looks at the background to the riot (particularly the massive strike by government workers in 2005), the causes of the riot, the targets of the rioters, and whether it was a class riot or a race riot. Most leftist publications covering the Tongan riots focus on capital's and the state's response to the riots, and tend to overlook the actual activity of the exploited class in Tonga. Perhaps this is because they don't see much radical potential in riots.

This piece doesn't examine why Australia and New Zealand sent in troops to crush the resistance, nor why they have "intervened" in the wider Pacific (both governments have also sent in troops to the Solomon Islands and East Timor). As well, I don't examine the increasingly important imperialist rivalry for control of the markets, resources and populations of the South Pacific between China, Taiwan, the US and Australia/New Zealand (often representing US interests, but not always; sometimes they pursue their own agenda in the Pacific). I recognise these imperialist aspects are essential to a broader understanding of Tonga and the Pacific, yet this isn't the purpose of this article.



This doesn't mean I support Australian and New Zealand imperialism (or any other form of imperialism), also known as "peacekeeping," in the Pacific.[1]

The main question that I explore in this article is whether the riot was a class riot or an anti-monarchy riot. The riot occurred just after the government, which is run by the King of Tonga, announced the stalling of democratic reform. People attending a pro-democracy rally were outraged, and went off and trashed government buildings and the business interests of the monarchy as a result. This strongly suggests, given the limited information available as to the actual motives of the rioters, that the riot was a "pro-democracy" affair. By pro-democracy, I don't mean direct democracy, such as that of workers' councils. Instead, I mean representative, parliamentary democracy.

Yet, on closer examination, the riot can't be reduced to an episode in the ongoing struggle in Tonga between the rising urban capitalist class, who support representative democracy, and the traditional aristocracy, who wish to retain the monarchy. The riot expressed the class rage of many "commoner" Tongans who've been impoverished by years of neoliberal reform and oppressed by centuries of authoritarian rule. They've been enraged by how the Tongan "royal" family and aristocracy have greatly enriched themselves through privatisation. The riot had some limited anti-capitalist content, especially in the joyful practise of proletarian shopping (also known as looting). The co-operation between thousands of rioters to carry out such a mass shopping expedition is a form of class-based self-organisation or self-activity. The rioters acted for themselves, rather than waiting for representatives to act for them.

Some have claimed the riot was a race riot against recent Chinese immigrants, who dominate the small business sector in Tonga. While the rioters did loot and burn many Chinese businesses, they also burnt down most businesses in Nuku'alofa, regardless of who owned them. Rioters initially targeted government buildings and the business interests of the monarchy rather than Chinese owned stores. Hence the riot can't be called a race riot.

Background: Feudalism, Remittances, Monarchism and all that

Tonga is one of the few surviving feudal monarchies in the world. The "royal" family and the aristocracy – made up of chiefs, who refer to themselves as the "nobility" – own about 75% of the land. The remaining 25% is owned by the government. The rest of the population are called "commoners," or more disparagingly "dirt eaters." Most "commoners" work off small plots of land, which they lease from the "royal" family, chiefly aristocracy and the government. "Royal" and "noble" landlords expect "commoners" to pay free tributes to them, normally in the form of food.

Tonga is often seen as the "friendly islands," a peaceful island paradise of golden beaches and palm trees. Tonga is historically one of the most stable and conservative countries in the Pacific. Traditionally, most "commoner" Tongans have taken to heart

the Christian doctrine of humble submissiveness. The church has preached "blind humility and unseeing allegiance [to the aristocracy and monarchy] will open the door to eternal glory." However, many Tongans are overcoming this indoctrination in recent years.

The Tongan economy is based on agriculture. The majority of the population engages in some form of subsistence production of food. About 50% of Tongans produce almost all of their basic food needs through farming and fishing. The only significant industry is the processing of coconuts into copra and desiccated coconut. Tourism provides most of the hard cash. Manufacturing, which is dominated by small industries, only accounts for about 10% of Tonga's GDP. However, an increasing proportion of workers are being employed in manufacturing since the monarchy has progressively "modernised" and monetised the economy. In the 1990s, those employed in manufacturing rose from 3% to 23% of the workforce, while correspondingly those employed in agriculture and fishing decreased from 49% to 34% of the workforce.

Yet Tonga can't be viewed as a simple feudal economy stuck in the past. It has, perhaps, a mixed feudal and capitalist economy. Most Tongans rely on remittances – money sent back home by relatives working abroad. Indeed, a whopping 31% of the Tongan GDP is made up by remittances, the highest proportion of remittances of any country in the world. Only Moldova (27% of GDP), Lesotho (26%), Haiti (25%) and Bosnia & Herzegovina (22.5%) come close (see "Gender, Migration, and Domestic Labor," *Prol-Position News*, 5 (2006)).

Remittances help pay for Tonga's massive trade deficit. In 2004, Tonga imported $122 million and exported $34 million. According to I. C. Campbell, Tongans mainly use remittances to buy imported consumer goods and cars, and to pay for building "modern" houses with "modern" facilities. As a result, most "commoner" Tongans aren't living at a subsistence level. According to Campbell, in the late 1990s there were 17,000 cars in Tonga, which meant there was one car for about every five Tongans.

Since the early 1970s, land shortages, unemployment and the search for a better life overseas have all contributed to a Tongan diaspora abroad. The major destinations have been New Zealand, Australia and the US. Today, about half of all Tongans live overseas. During the post WWII long boom and labour shortage, capitalists encouraged migrant labour from the Pacific Islands. In 1970, a scheme began whereby Tongans were allowed to migrate temporarily to work in blue-collar employment. Many migrated to Auckland, which has the largest Polynesian population of any city in the world. Capitalists preferred Tongan factory workers because they thought they were hard-workers, sober, reliable, obedient and prepared to do the tedious work that others refused to do (see De Bres et al, 1974). Once the long boom collapsed, the New Zealand government no longer welcomed Pacific (a term which has increasingly replaced the old term "Pacific Island" in recent years) workers. Indeed, **they *forcibly deported* many through the infamous police "DAWN RAIDS" which began in 1974 under the Labour Government**

(see De Bres et al 1974 and De Bres and Campbell 1976). In the 1990s, a quota system operated, with stringent entry qualifications.

Today, Tongans who live overseas work largely in unskilled and semi-skilled blue-collar jobs. For example, in New Zealand, Tongans predominantly have factory jobs, such as freezing workers/abattoir workers, or other blue-collar jobs, such as cleaners. These jobs are low-paid by New Zealand standards, but are relatively well-paid by Tongan standards. In 1996, the wage rate for unskilled labour in Tonga was 80c to $1 NZ per hour, while the equivalent rate in New Zealand was almost ten times that.

Despite these remittances, Tonga is a poor country. It has one of the widest gaps between rich and poor in the South Pacific. There are a tiny number of wealthy citizens, as the aristocracy make up less than 1% of the population. The gap has widened considerably since the introduction of neoliberal reforms in recent years. Agricultural output has fallen below its 1980 level. Unemployment is high at 13%, and only a quarter of school leavers can find work. Many attempt to emigrate. In 2003, the Gross Domestic Product per capita was $US2,200. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently claimed that the Tongan economy was on the verge of collapse. Since 1991, GDP has fallen 1.1% per year, compared to a growth rate of 3.1% in Samoa during the same time. So as living standards in Samoa have steadily risen, they have plummeted in Tonga.

Josh Liava'a, a "key pro-democracy campaigner," has said on Niu FM (an Auckland radio station):

> We have people living right in the middle of the rubbish tip, and they share the food with the dogs, the rats, the rodents, the flies and the mosquitoes…There is the no other country in the Pacific that has got that horrendous living condition and situation like some of our people are experiencing in Tonga.

This is one of the more important factors in causing an upsurge in class struggle in Tonga in recent years.

Neoliberalism and privatisation has enriched the "royal" family and the aristocracy enormously. Perhaps fearing their days are numbered with the ever-increasing encroachment of capitalism into Tonga, "royalty" and the chiefly aristocracy have broadened their portfolio. In the past, their wealth was based on owning land. Today, they also own many businesses, including key strategic industries such as electricity and telecommunications. For instance, the King has amassed a personal fortune because he owns Tonga's electricity company, its beer company, one of its mobile phone companies (Tonfon), a cable television company and the rights to Tonga's internet domain name. Princess Pilolevu owns lucrative geo-orbital satellite slots, which were originally given to the Tongan government for its own communication needs. Hence the Princess turned the government's satellite entitlement into her own private satellite communications business, Tongasat. In 2000, the new



King George Tupou V, then a prince, tried to sell the genetic information of Tongans to an Australian biotech company. Overall, the "royals" and aristocracy are seen as nepotistic, corrupt, arrogant, aloof and greedy. The current King George Tupou V, who was educated at Oxford University and the Sandhurst military academy, has openly shown his contempt for "commoners."

Yet it's not only the "commoners" who have been alienated by the greed of the aristocracy. The business elite also think that the aristocratic class has unfairly looted the wealth of Tonga. They are bitterly disappointed that neoliberalism has enriched the traditional elite of Tonga rather than themselves. This is worth remembering when the pro-democracy movement is considered later in this article.

Tonga's "royal" family, established in the 19th century under the tutelage of British Methodist missionaries, wields almost absolute governmental power. The King appoints the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister for life. He also appoints the entire cabinet, the Privy Council and the Supreme Court. Parliament or Fale Alea has 30 seats, of which twelve are reserved for the appointed cabinet ministers, nine are selected by the country's 33 "nobles" or chiefs, who acquire their life titles by descent, and only nine ("the people's representatives" or "commoner politicians") are elected by popular vote.

The Tongan aristocracy wasn't imposed by European imperialism. Indeed,

Tonga is unique in the Pacific because it was never fully annexed by a European power (Britain had "protectorate" status, or control of Tonga's foreign policy, from 1900 to 1970, when Tonga gained full independence). Although the Tongan aristocracy has adopted many aspects of the European and Japanese aristocratic traditions, it has also strong indigenous roots. It seems that Tongan society before European contact in the 17th century was one of the most hierarchical societies in Polynesia, apart from perhaps Hawaii. Tongan society was broadly divided into three classes:

(1) the hou'eiki (chiefs), matāpule (talking chiefs) and mu'a (would-be talking chiefs)
(2) the tu'a (commoners)
(3) the pōpula or hopoate (slaves)

All titles were heritable. The high chief was known as the Tu'i Tonga, the ancient title for the ruler of Tonga. The Tu'i Tonga were omnipotent monarchs whose very touch rendered an object tapu (sacred). The distinction between commoners and slaves in practice was little, as chiefs could kill, beat or rob commoners without reason or defence.

The 2005 Wildcat Strike and the Pro-Democracy Movement

Resistance to the Tongan regime has been brewing since the 1960s, especially after Tongans returned home with new ideas from abroad. A popular pro-democracy movement emerged in the 1980s, but it has been a very mild movement until recently.[2] Its main forms of protest have been petitioning the King and holding demonstrations calling for democratic reform. As the King has ignored these pleas, many Tongans have become frustrated with the ineffectiveness of these protests. Hence they have spontaneously turned to more radical forms of protest, including a wildcat strike and rioting in the last few years.

In 2005, the largest and most successful strike in Tongan history took place. It lasted seven weeks, and involved 3,000 government workers. It was a wildcat strike: it wasn't organised by unions; instead, it helped found the Public Services Association (PSA), the union for government workers. Dr. Aivi Puloka, the president of the Public Services Association, has said.

> Before the strike there was no PSA. There was no Trade Union movement. It was just a spontaneous reaction of dissatisfaction with the government…And public servants decided to walk out from work. How was it organised? It was just an announcement and everybody turned up. [Puloka interviewed by Smush and SLM].

Strikes and unions are relatively new in Tonga; according to I. C. Campbell, the first union in Tonga was formed in 1976, and the country didn't experience its first recorded strike by wage-workers (by nurses) until 1980.

The strike blossomed into a popular rebellion against the monarchy. There were daily gatherings of workers and their supporters in Nuku'alofa as well as large protests elsewhere in Tonga. The Tongan community in New Zealand also organised protests, including solidarity demonstrations outside the King of Tonga's New Zealand residence in Auckland. Some demonstrators rammed the gate of the King's residency and scuffles broke out with police and security guards. The strikers and supporters started to demand constitutional reform. Protests reached a peak with one demonstration of 10,000-20,000 people, almost one tenth to one fifth of the Tongan population and the largest march in Tongan history, calling for democratic reform. "Royal" owned houses

were torched, government cars overturned, school classrooms wrecked and a petrol bomb thrown at a house owned by business partners of the current King.

The government, fearing an uprising, needed to end the strike. The PSA, whose leadership is closely tied to the major organisation of the "pro-democracy" movement, the Friendly Islands Human Rights and Democracy Movement (HRDM), feared that the strike was threatening to escape its control. Hence it suited both the government and the PSA leadership to end the strike. After 45 days, the strike was won and pay increases between 60-80% were conceded to all "public servants" or government workers.[3]

The rioters were of all ages. Children and the elderly took part. A large minority were women. At times, whole families participated in the looting, wheeling away their goods in supermarket trolleys.

The strike caused divisions within the pro-democracy movement. In particular, the strike alienated some of the leadership of the "pro-democracy" movement who think that the monarchy and aristocracy have been inept in managing Tongan workers. The wage increase of almost 80% for government workers "threatens macroeconomic instability," according to Gaurav Sodhi of the Centre of Independent Studies (see Sodhi 2006). Some leaders of the pro-democracy movement, especially those tied to the business community, see the increase as "suicidal" and "unaffordable." They want a neoliberal state that reverses these gains (ie. cuts wages) and prevents rioting from occurring in the future. One reason why they want representative, bourgeois democracy is because they believe the current political set-up has made Tongan workers and peasants too rebellious.

The emerging capitalist class in Tonga, as represented by the Tongan National Business Association, aims to further its own class interests at the expense of Tongan "commoners." They see the feudal monarchy as an unwieldy obstacle to the proper "modernisation" and "liberalisation" of the Tongan economy. Ideally, they would like to see the "royal" and aristocratic monopoly on land ownership abolished, government-owned land privatised, the guarantee that allows every Tongan over 16 to lease 8 acres of government-owned land removed, large-scale agri-business set up and tourist resorts built. This process would force many "commoners" off the land and into wage-slavery in Tonga or overseas. They also want to end strong "restrictions" on commercial agriculture such as "stifling" export licences for export produce. They want to "open up" the Tongan economy to foreign ownership (which is currently prohibited) and the injection of overseas capital.

However, the pro-democracy movement shouldn't be confused with the Tongan National Business Association. For example, the HRDM seems to be a broad, and uneasy, cross-class coalition of workers, unionists, politicians, urban business elites (and expatriate capitalists overseas) and middle-class elements who've been university educated overseas. Information about the HRDM is sketchy. It appears, from the limited

information available, that the HRDM's political aims are to get a higher percentage of "commoner" politicians elected in parliament and eventually a constitutional monarch along the lines of Britain. The Trotskyist World Socialist Website claim that its economic aims are to implement the demands of the IMF and World Bank.[4] Yet it's possible that the WSWS may be confusing the HRDM's economic aims with those of the Tongan National Business Association. The Business Association are involved in the HRDM, but so too are social democrats such as "commoner" politician 'Akilisi Pohiva, who want to "share the wealth" of Tonga. Others involved in the broader pro-democracy movement don't support neoliberal policies, such as the People's Democratic Party, a leftist split from the HRDM.

Yet overall it's important to note that the downfall of authoritarian, bureaucratic regimes in Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia in the 1990s by popular movements often led to the formation of "democratic" regimes that instituted severe neoliberal reforms. That is, there is a strong relationship between the establishment of bourgeois democracy and neoliberal reform (see David Seddon and John Walton, *Free Markets and Food Riots*).

The Riot. A Pro-Democracy Affair?

Shortly after the strike, King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV died in 2006. He was succeeded by his eldest son, George Tupou V. Tongans expected some democratic reform under the new monarch, especially as the government formed a committee to do so following the 2005 strike. On 16 November 2006, the final sitting day of parliament for the year, a pro-democracy rally of several thousand marched to parliament in Nuku'alofa (population: c.35,000). They demanded that a vote on major democratic reforms take place before the house rose for the year. Yet parliament was adjourned for the year without having made any of the promised reforms. In frustration and anger, over 2,000 people spontaneously set off and rioted.

The rioters were of all ages. Children and the elderly took part. A large minority were women. At times, whole families participated in the looting, wheeling away their goods in supermarket trolleys. It wasn't limited to a few criminal types. Yet most of the rioters were young males. Later news reports blamed the rioting on drunken youth. One Tongan American commented on the Aotearoa (New Zealand) Indymedia website "those who participated in the riots seem to have been rowdy deported misfits from the US. Ex-gang members and scum of society."

The rioters weren't a mindless, drunken mob, indiscriminately looting and burning everything in sight. They targeted specific buildings and businesses. For example, they gutted the headquarters of the Shoreline group of companies, which runs Tonga's electricity company. Shoreline is owned by the King. They also looted and burnt down Tonfon, Tonga's major phone company, also owned by the King. So, it seems, they targeted buildings and businesses closely associated with the King and his government.

In this respect, the Tongan riot resembled the "IMF riots" against neoliberalism that erupted in Africa, South and Central America, and Asia in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.[5] Like the IMF riots, the Tongan rioters deliberately targeted specific institutions that they perceived as responsible for their exploitation and degradation. The IMF riots typically targeted government buildings, symbols of international capital and foreign affluence, shopping malls, supermarkets and major retail outlets.

The Tongan riot closely followed this pattern. Rioters attacked government buildings, smashing windows in the Prime Minster's Office and Cabinet Office in Parliament House, the Magistrates Court, the Public Service Commission, and the Ministry of Finance, and overturning numerous government cars, including police cars. They also targeted symbols of international capital, such as the only overseas bank in town, the ANZ bank, and the symbols of foreign affluence, such as the Pacifica Royale luxury hotel, which is owned by King's business associates, the 'Indian Princess' Sefo and Soane Ramanlal. Further, they looted and set ablaze major retail outlets and a shopping complex (including a supermarket) owned by the unelected, royal appointed Prime Minister Feleti Seveli (who has strong links to the pro-democracy movement, and was appointed by the King to appease popular discontent). Overall, most of the symbols of modern capitalism and foreign affluence were attacked, such as banks, cinemas and shopping malls, while more traditional forms of business, such as the Nuku'alofa markets, were left alone.

So it seems to be a clear-cut case that the riot was a pro-democracy rampage. Protesters, frustrated with the autocratic, authoritarian King, as well as the lack of democratic reform, went off and attacked government buildings and the business interests of the monarchy. "Smush," an Indymedia activist from New Zealand who visited Tonga after the riots, has written,

> After seeing downtown Nuku'alofa and talking to various people, I think the riot's roots lie in the people's deep frustration and anger with the government, the nobles, the King and the feudal system as a whole. The riots were targeting government buildings, companies owned by the PM, King and his family and outside the city centre some Chinese and Indian shops…In the city centre, most shops were looted and destroyed and many burnt down (ie. every shop was targeted).

However, this explanation only tells one part of the story. Yes, the riot was caused by a lack of democratic reform. Yet it was also a class riot.

Or a Festival of the Oppressed?

Latu Kolomatangi, of the pro-democracy movement, has said of the class nature of the riot:

> I think on that day [the day of the riot] it was the day of the poor people to get their share from the business people. Seeing people enjoying taking goods out of the shops and burning them made me think of the poor and how they get their share from the business people. For years they collect from the poor. Thursday [the day of the riot] is a day for the poor to take their share from them. [Kolomatangi interviewed by Smush and SLM].

As such, the riot was a day of class revenge by the oppressed: they freely took from the businesses that had been taking and profiting from them. By mass looting, Tongan "commoners" went beyond mere calls for democratic reform. They organised themselves, and took freely what they needed from the stores. Claims

that the riot was simply an "anti-feudal" riot are misleading as, like the IMF riots, the Tongan riot didn't revolve around the question of land ownership. It wasn't an explosion of peasant discontent over the lack of land redistribution; like the IMF riots, it was primarily an urban riot of the "urban poor."

The looting was carried out in a carnival atmosphere. One news report said "Laughing and Looting as Tonga's capital burns." An eyewitness to the looting commented, "Most Tongans had smiles on their faces like it was Christmas come early." Footage of the riot taken by European tourists and posted on a website showed a large crowd going about mass, systematic looting. Once one store was cleaned out, it was set alight. What's overwhelming from watching the footage is the carnival atmosphere of the riot – the continual din of laughter, chatter and whooping.

A classic analysis of a riot, namely of the 1965 Watts riot in Los Angeles, was written by Guy Debord of the Situationist International:

> The Los Angeles rebellion was a rebellion against the commodity…Like the young delinquents of all the advanced countries…the Los Angeles blacks take modern capitalist propaganda, its publicity of abundance, *literally*. They want to possess now all the objects shown and abstractly accessible, because they want to use them. In this way they are challenging their exchange-value…Through theft and gift they rediscover a use that immediately refutes the oppressive rationality of the commodity, revealing its relations and even its production to be arbitrary and unnecessary. The looting of the Watts district was the most direct realization of the distorted principle: 'To each according to their *false* needs' – needs determined and produced by the economic system which the very act of looting rejects.

Many aspects of Debord's analysis are questionable, such as his distinction between "real" and "false" desires, and "real" and "false" needs. Much of his analysis is dated, as it only applies to the era of "abundance" during the post WWII long boom. Also, looting shouldn't be glorified, as it's clearly a limited form of class-based self-organisation. To state the obvious, rioting is a temporary and spontaneous rampage, a venting of anger, that doesn't offer constructive alternatives. Looting fixes responsibility on the retailer rather than the producer, and is thus limited to the realm of consumption. However, Debord does make a case that looting is a distorted example of communist distribution in action, in that people were taking freely from stores according to their "false" needs.

While it's true most protesters merely wanted representative democracy, their (nascent anti-capitalist) practice during the riot was sometimes ahead of their (democratic) theory. Significantly, most businesses in the CBD of Nuku'alofa were gutted, not just the interests of the "royal" family, aristocracy and Chinese community. The riot happened against the wishes of the leadership of the democracy movement. Journalist Mateni Tapueluelu told the *NZ Herald*, "They [the protesters] demanded that if



the Government did not agree to political reform by 2008, they would do something – nobody knew what they meant," he said. "None of the leading activists or people's representatives were leading this: they tried to stop it but they couldn't stop it." For example, a prominent leader of the democracy movement, politician 'Akilisi Pohiva, went on the radio to urge demonstrators to stop looting and go home. Other pro-democracy politicians made similar pleas. Many figures in the democracy movement distanced themselves from the riot. Osi Maama, editor of the *Tonga Times* interviewed on the Newstalk ZB radio station immediately after the riots, commented "the thing is…a lot of people wanted to do these damages…[it was] nothing to do with political democratic movement."

As an aside, not only did they burn down most businesses in Nuku'alofa, they also burnt down the offices of the HRDM. The HRDM had their offices upstairs in the Tungi Arcade, which was torched by the rioters. Perhaps by (intentionally or unintentionally) burning down their offices, the rioters recognised that a few democratic reforms or even overthrowing the monarchy and bringing in bourgeois democracy wouldn't really alleviate, let alone abolish, their class exploitation (although the situation is complex, as getting rid of an absolutist monarchy would probably help somewhat, open up some space for further struggle, and give Tongan "commoners" much confidence in their ability to change society).

Or perhaps they just wished to burn down a shopping mall. Either way, their practice was ahead of their apparent adherence to representative democracy.

Or a Race Riot?

The Tongan riot, like the rioting in the Solomon Islands in 2006, has been portrayed as an anti-Chinese rampage. Small business, particularly retail establishments on Tongatapu island – the main island of Tonga – is dominated by recent Chinese migrants who arrived under a cash-for-passports scheme that ceased in 1998. According to academic Phil Crocombe, Chinese migrants own 72% of business in Tonga. It's difficult to find exact figures as to how many Chinese live in Tonga. Some say a few hundred, others a few thousand. Tonga is ethnically homogeneous, as Tongans make up 98% of Tonga's population.

Many Chinese owned shops, especially the larger retail establishments, were looted and burnt. But Hu Yeshun, the Chinese Ambassador to Tonga, said in the *People's Daily* (China) immediately after the riot that "more than 25 percent of Chinese stores [about 30] were looted or burned yesterday, causing big losses to the owners." Yet since the riot set ablaze 80% of Nuku'alofa's CBD, the figure of "more than 25%" of Chinese-owned businesses being destroyed is disproportionately small. So if Yeshun's estimation is true, it suggests that rioters didn't go out of their way to destroy Chinese-owned stores, in contrast to what was reported in most capitalist media reports. Hence labelling the riot as a race riot is false.

Indeed, Indymedia reporters talked to one woman, who saw the rioters refrain from setting alight a few Chinese shops. She said the rioters looked like they were going to loot and burn down four shops, some of which were operated by Chinese. But many people stood in front of the shops to protect them. They managed to persuade the rioters not to burn the shops because it would've destroyed people's houses too. Only one shop was looted and none were burnt. On another occasion, rioters only smashed the windows of a Chinese restaurant.

Overall, while some Chinese businesses were looted, the rioters were driven by class anger rather than race hatred. The main causes of the riot weren't anti-Chinese racism. The main causes of the riot were, as I have argued above, anger with the Tongan feudal class system and the emerging capitalist system in Tonga, as well as frustration with the lack of democratic reform to the monarchical government. A small minority of Tongans dislike the Chinese, but racism doesn't appear to be too deep. Indeed, Smush has suggested that racism is more widespread amongst urban Tongan capitalists (who support the democracy movement) than Tongan urban and rural workers. Smush has written:

> I do think that there are some anti-Chinese exponents amongst democracy supporters, particularly in the 'business community.' They say they are angry at the King's 'undemocratic approval' of 400 Chinese immigrants over night. The suggestion of an 'ethnic conflict,' as presented by some of

the mainstream/capitalist media, (a) downplays the widely held disgust with the current system (and therefore plays in the hand of the ruling class), and (b) is far from the truth because most Tongan people are friendly, or at least not unfriendly, towards Chinese immigrants.

Conclusions

The Tongan riot was a mixed pro-democracy and class riot. Frustration with the authoritarian monarchy and its lack of democratic reform was the most obvious cause of the riot. That being the case, perhaps the Tongan riot will be just seen as an explosive episode in the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Tonga, and thus lacked anti-capitalist content. Yet in looting and burning most businesses in Nuku'alofa, rioters went beyond mere calls for representative democracy and the toppling of the hated feudal system. Dispossessed Tongans targeted institutions they thought were responsible for their impoverishment. As such, "black Thursday," as the riot has been called, was a day of class revenge. Not only is the old feudal establishment in Tonga worried that they might be soon overthrown, the leadership of the pro-democracy movement is worried that many dispossessed Tongans have become too unruly. The leadership of the pro-democracy movement will attempt to channel the rebellion into safe, bourgeois channels, such as parliamentary reform.

The Tongan riot is part of a wider surge in class struggle in the Pacific since 2005. Since this date, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, New Caledonia and Tahiti have experienced major strikes, and Tonga and the Solomons have experienced riots. More unrest and IMF style riots are likely, as neoliberal market reforms imposed by the IMF and World Bank have savagely cut the living standards of Pacific people, while enriching island elites. Increasingly, island elites lack the resources to control their own population, hence Australia and New Zealand have sent in troops to prop up unpopular regimes and to repress popular movements. It will be interesting to see how this rebellion develops in the Pacific. Ⓐ

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Endnotes

1. I oppose these "interventions," but that doesn't mean I support Leninist "anti-imperialism," which claims people in countries dominated by foreign powers ought to form nationalist cross-class alliances to kick out the foreign enemy.
2. Most involved in the "pro-democracy" movement don't even want the overthrow of the monarchy, but instead a power-sharing relationship with the King through more "commoner" politicians being able to be elected. The "radicals" want a British style system (a parliament with a constitutional monarch).
3. Although in June 2007 the Tongan government has threatened to refuse to pay the agreed pay increases. In response, the PSA has threatened strikes.
4. See John Braddock, "Newspaper ban exposes growing conflict in Tongan ruling circles," http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/jun2003/tong-j06.shtml, posted 6 June 2003.
5. The IMF riots mostly took the form of food riots in response to price hikes and food shortages caused by the imposition of IMF "structural adjustment policies," but they sometimes took the form of a political demonstration that got out of hand. The Tongan riot was of the latter category.

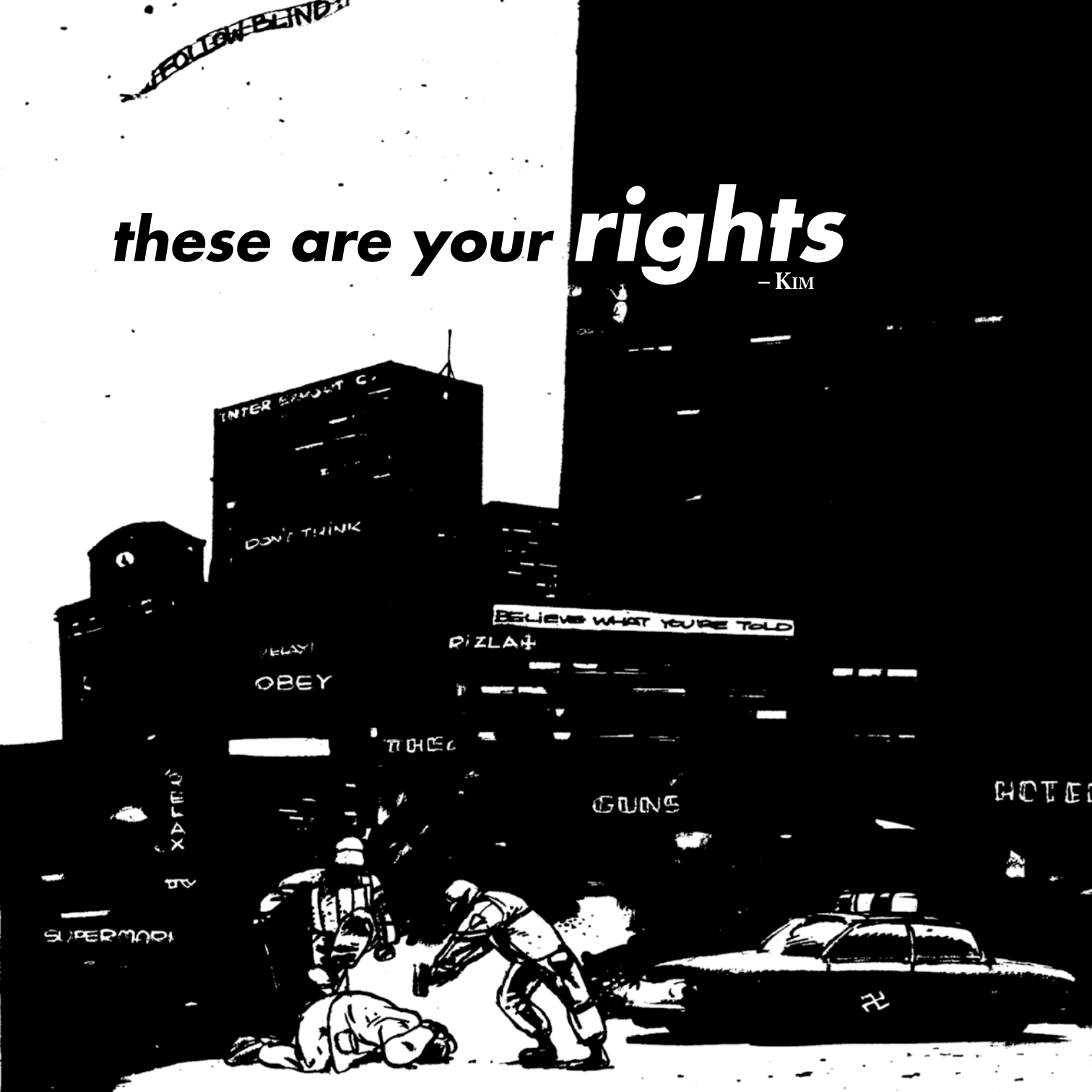
New Zealand law promises us certain rights. This article uses freedom of expression to show how the state balances the impression of these rights under law, against maintaining its power by ensuring the rights are not real. The vagueness of the law means it is open to interpretation. The police are a conservative institution that exists to enforce existing authority, if there is doubt in their instructions, we can expect them to have a conservative, authoritarian bias. This happens at two main stages: where police bosses interpret law into guidelines for those enforcing it, and where those officers interpret those guidelines into actions. The courts are unpredictable, with outcomes depending on individual biases of judges.

Know your rights,

If you read the PR, you probably have a fair idea of what the New Zealand Police want you to believe they stand for – protecting the public. You might sometimes spot an inconsistency in their message that sounds troubling. "We are the coercive arm of the state" (Police Association President Greg O'Connor, June 2005), for example, does not sound quite as warm and friendly as "building safer communities together" or "keeping the peace."

The last few years have seen some terrifying examples of police culture, even people who have little need to fear them have felt driven to sigh in disapproval, and mutter that it might be time for an independent agency to investigate complaints. The Bazley Report (which responded to publicity showing police culture abusive to women and contributing to rape and sexual abuse) was scathing of police culture. Ross Meurant (ex-Minister of Police and head of police anti-protest unit Red Squad) criticised the culture of groups like the SIS and his Red Squad. SIS and other police were embarrassed by court rulings on Ahmed Zaoui, adding to past humiliation by Aziz Choudry and David Small. Howard Broad described Operation 8, now being investigated by the UN for breaches of Human Rights, as a dog's breakfast.

For whatever reason, the media have not been inspired by this, and the New Zealand public seems unwilling to think or act without the direction of media. Although we now have an Independent Police Conduct Authority (dependent on the state for funding at a level that makes it effectively dependent on police for investigating complaints), these examples of a morally worrying and politically backward police force have not lead to restrictions of their powers. In fact, police powers have actually been extended in an area where they have proven themselves particularly over-zealous – policing dissent and protests.


these are your rights
– Kim
FOLLOW BLIND
DON'T THINK
BELIEVE WHAT YOU'RE TOLD
OBEY
GUNS
SUPERMOD

What the law says Section 14 of New Zealand's Bill of Rights Act states "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and opinions of any kind in any form." Section 6 of the Bill of Rights Act states that the Summary Offences Act (which includes disorderly and offensive behaviour, obstruction, and the like) must be used consistently with freedom of expression. Police can only limit political expression when necessary for the rights or reputations of others, or for reasons of national security or public order, public health, or morals.

What Police guidelines say Police guidelines for demonstrations say they "must balance the need to maintain order against the rights of citizens...freedom of speech, peaceful demonstration, security of life and property, and freedom from intimidation or interference. Preservation of the peace is paramount. Subject to that, police should as far as possible allow individuals and groups to exercise their rights." Police are required to "exercise tact, tolerance and restraint; remain impartial; and use their powers reasonably and properly" (Police General Instructions, D031 – Basic principles). I would like to examine these guidelines, and the way I see them used.

"Preservation of peace is paramount" The Bill of Rights says pretty clearly that freedom of expression is more important than keeping the peace. Activists using demonstrations as a "form" of "imparting information and opinions" should be allowed more leeway than usual, within the limits set out in the Act. However, those limits are vague, and police have taken the most authoritarian interpretation possible. In November 2007, Police were given instructions to remove demonstrators where their behaviour is disorderly or personally offensive or humiliating to their target. **Wellington Operational Commander,** Inspector Stenhouse, has even **instructed police to 'make every effort to minimise the impact of protest.'** In practice, this means *arresting protesters whenever circumstances allow* and restricting behaviour as far as possible, ignoring the promises of the Bill of Rights.

"Exercise tact, tolerance and restraint" At a 2007 Wellington anti-war protest, a man was arrested for using chalk on the outside wall of a building, only to be released when police realised media were recording the arrest. At a 2007 Auckland anti-fur protest, one person was arrested and charged with Disorderly Behaviour for using a megaphone. In 2006, police arrested two picketers on the footpath outside a Progressive store, who were found guilty of

Obstructing a Public Way. At ANZAC day 2007, a man and woman were arrested for blowing a trumpet and lighting a flag respectively. Although they argued their actions were a form of political expression, protesting the current occupations of ANZAC troops around the world, the man was found guilty of Obstruction and Resisting Arrest, and the woman of Offensive Behaviour. Compare this to the 15 men, alleged to have thrown bottles at police in Dunedin after the "Undie 500," charged with Obstruction and Disorderly Conduct. Apparently police see a single man trying to hold onto his trumpet in an antiwar protest as similar to a group of men attacking them while pissed.

A common complaint from demonstrators after large actions is that non-violent protest was met with violence from police. Police are more tactful in the way they employ violence against demonstrators than in the past. The methods they mostly use now don't make for the dramatic photos of swinging nightsticks from the 80s and 90s. Police may use "mastoid thumb pressure" against "non violent offenders who refuse to move" or "passive offenders" (Police General Instructions A264). The photo opportunities are not great, but the pain is no less real. At a 2005 anti-GE protest in Rotorua, police arrested three non-violent demonstrators, using pepper spray on one; a judge stated that police procedures "appear to have been more observed in their breach than their compliance." The use of pepper spray in this case has resulted in a lawsuit against police. After the 2006 demonstration that closed Te Papa for part of a day while a weapons conference was held inside, several women complained of police reaching across the barricades and squeezing their breasts to the extent of bruising, presumably in order to push the women back; this technique was used again at a demonstration against the US NZ partnership forum in Auckland 2007. It seems a reasonable assumption that having been used during at least two demonstrations and on several women by several officers, this is a condoned, if not official, method of crowd control.

These examples are representative of decisions police make during demonstrations. Tact, restraint and tolerance must be interpreted in strange ways by police. Two recent exceptions suggest what it takes for them to approach even their low and fuzzy guidelines. At the 2007 Wellington demonstration against police rape culture, police were largely unseen. Again in 2007 when the Tuhoe hikoi against police racism and the invasion of Tuhoe arrived in Wellington, police were uncharacteristically low key. These two demonstrations attracted wide media interest, activists from a range of backgrounds, and were protesting obvious examples of police corruption. It appears that only when there is mainstream media presence and the demonstration includes well-dressed, older activists, can we expect restraint and tact from police.

"Remain impartial" At a demonstration outside the Labour Party Conference in December 2007, police did nothing while a Labour Party member

assaulted a protester with a megaphone, police then arrested a protester for "spitting" while performing a haka. TV3 had clear footage of both incidents: a man struck in the face with a megaphone, and a fleck of spit leaving a man's mouth as he chanted; it is obvious that police were not impartial. During a 2007 anti-war demonstration directed against John Howard, a single demonstrator asking three police why he wasn't allowed past them was pushed several times, then thrown to the ground. Moments later a man drove his car down the street police had closed, and attempted to drive through standing and seated demonstrators with their backs to him; no police tried to stop him, they intervened to clear a way through for him. From my experience of witnessing police at demonstrations, I believe this is representative of the position police take against protesters. John Minto talks of a "long-standing, deep-seated, simmering resentment of protest groups by the police." They appear antagonistic towards activists, and allow assault on activists by other people. Police are trained in a culture that is unable to be impartial.

Police use their power to punish people unlikely to be punished in court. Being arrested is often violent, and always stressful and time-consuming, whether or not police lay charges. I am unaware of anyone being compensated for time and stress as a result of unreasonable arrest. One case in 2006, where people dressed as clowns were arrested, held in cells for 10 hours, and charged with intimidation and unlawfully on property after visiting a suburban street, proceeded for more than a year. Those arrested were bailed at large, but were expected to appear at court regularly while police debated changing charges, dropping charges, and setting new dates for future hearings. After nearly 18 months of uncertainty, and many hours of lawyers time, all charges were dropped.

What about the courts Activists can hope that courts will lean more towards freedom of expression than police do. Judges have often been critical of police for heavy-handedness with demonstrators. Several activists have successfully complained about police behaviour and received compensation for injuries that resulted. However, sympathy from courts is unreliable, as the convictions in this article illustrate. In 2006 when two men barricaded themselves to train tracks (warning the rail company ahead of time) and stopped a cargo train in protest of West Coast coal mining, were they unreasonably threatening the rights or reputations of others, national security or public order, public health, or morals? A court said they were. What about the men on the picket line, or the people at the ANZAC protest – they may have offended people, but did they actually threaten their rights?

Do we have the right to protest? Who do we accept our rights from? If police must remove demonstrators for disorderly or personally offensive behaviour, and judges are convicting demonstrators of summary offences without regard to freedom of expression, then how are we to protest legally? When you add this to the insane amount of state surveillance of activist groups, and the recent attempt by police to use anti-terror legislation against activists, it is obvious that the state does not consider that we have a right to any dissent.

Remember most protests are predictable and easily managed. The state has seen so many marches and demonstrations, it knows what little threat they are: they are symbolic gestures. And still police often

reply to our actions with very real violence. And we become distracted by our rage at the police, as if we are surprised by their response. So we engage with them, complaining about their tactics, sounding exactly like the liberals we so often criticise. We protest against them, unsure of what it is that we are trying to achieve – except making us feel a bit better. We try to stare them down, we argue with them, we talk about fighting them, as if by overpowering a police officer we will win a real victory. As if the hand-full of people who agree with these tactics are enough to take on the state by force.

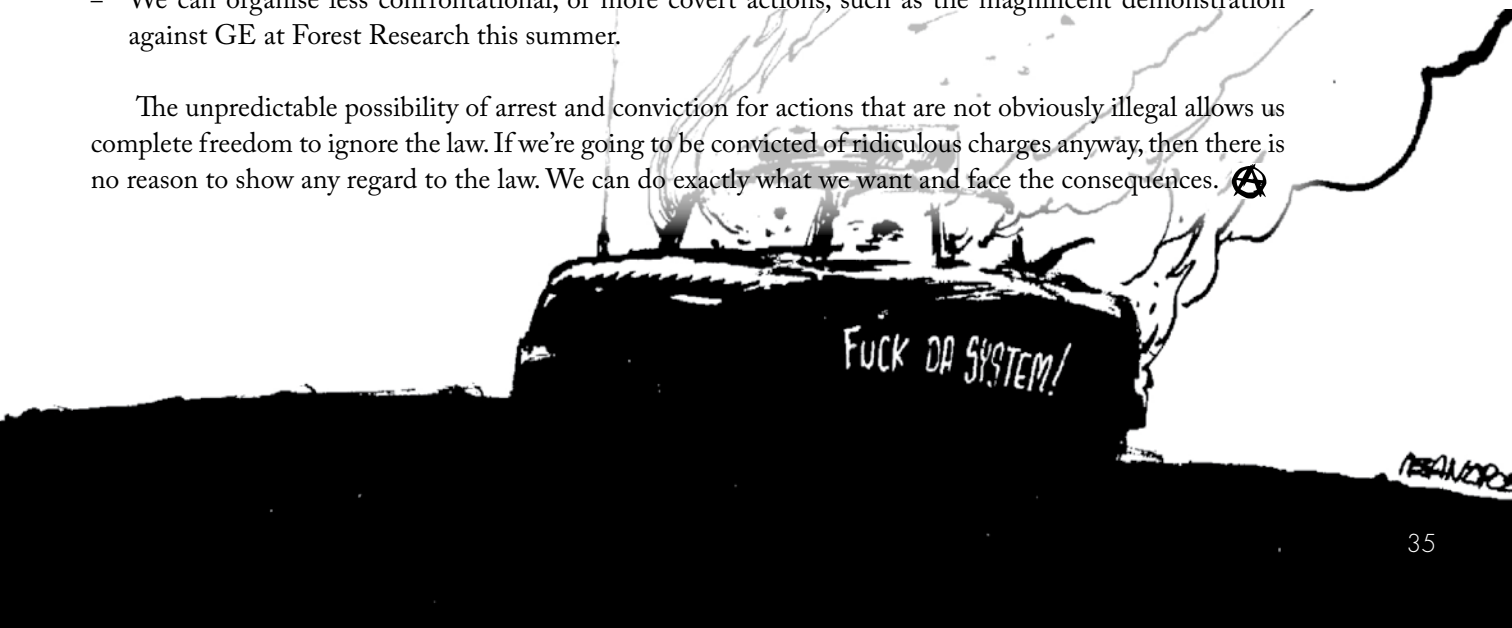
So what to do? We reject the authority of the state and the police, therefore we can't complain when they don't respect our civil rights. Instead of whining when police do what they're paid to do, we should take the opportunity to expose the state for what it is. To show others that our "civil rights" only exist as long as we aren't stupid enough to try to use them.

We need to be strategic. We can expect to be arrested seemingly at random, regardless of how lawful or harmless our actions are. We need to make sure our actions are never harmless, they should always be meaningful and well directed. We need to be prepared for those arrests; this can mean lots of things, including making successful arrests less likely, making convictions less likely, and making convictions less painful.

We have some choices to make.

- We can continue to ignore the surveillance and potential for police antagonism and arrests, and organise however we want.
- We can continue to demonstrate in the same ways, but spend more time on preparing for police responses, as many did before the successful 2006 demonstration against a weapons conference at Te Papa.
- We can organise less confrontational, or more covert actions, such as the magnificent demonstration against GE at Forest Research this summer.

The unpredictable possibility of arrest and conviction for actions that are not obviously illegal allows us complete freedom to ignore the law. If we're going to be convicted of ridiculous charges anyway, then there is no reason to show any regard to the law. We can do exactly what we want and face the consequences. Ⓐ





Operation 8

How the Police Watched Us and How They Are Still Watching Us

– Mysterex

Operation 8 was the name of the police operation that resulted in the raids on October 15th 2007. It is the biggest police investigation of political activists in this country for decades and still continues today. Dozens of police spent at least two years and $8 million on the investigation, which has resulted in the police laying charges against 20 defendants.

This article is an attempt to describe briefly how the police investigation progressed. As the case is still before the courts we won't be naming any names or going into details, just describing what methods the police used to monitor activists and gather information. Then we will discuss what we can learn from this and how we can operate more effectively as activists in this new world of constant surveillance and harassment.

The police "terrorism" case against Maori activists and anarchists has its origins long before Operation Eight began. In the 1990s political activists were under surveillance from police intelligence groups based in the main cities. Police in each main city had an intelligence office which (among other things) kept track of radical political activists. Files on individuals were updated regularly and when a large protest or activist event (eg. a conference or gathering) was expected, police would divert resources into surveillance and intelligence gathering for that event, but the number of detectives working fulltime on watching radicals was very small. After the September 11 terror attacks in New York, everything changed.

In January 2002, the Labour government approved new anti-terrorism legislation, and new "operational capabilities." The result was the Terrorism Suppression Act and, more importantly, a range of new anti-terrorism forces. The police created: a position of assistant commissioner for counter-terrorism; a 12-person anti-terrorism Strategic Intelligence Unit at police headquarters; a fulltime commando-style Special Tactics Group specialising in terrorism; and police liaison officers in Washington and London to channel anti-terrorism ideas and intelligence to New Zealand. An extra 35 "national security" police posts were added in 2004, the majority in "investigative and intelligence" units.

The Security Intelligence Service also got 20 new anti-terrorism staff at that time. Their task: increasing terrorism intelligence collection within New Zealand. They provided more field intelligence officers, especially in Auckland, an enlarged surveillance team and new analysts at headquarters. New interception and photographic equipment cost $1 million and, like the police, an SIS officer was posted to the Washington embassy to increase collaboration with the US intelligence and security agencies. The overall SIS budget has more than doubled in the last five years.

So, we had lots of police and SIS staff all employed fulltime to find terrorists in New Zealand. Only trouble is, there weren't any. So they started looking for people who they thought might be terrorists. First they tried Ahmed Zaoui, throwing him in jail (without any evidence or charges) and eventually admitting five years after that he wasn't a threat after all. They also appeared to be looking closely at animal rights activists, anarchists and anti war activists. Court documents reveal the police counter-terrorism assistant commissioner Jon White was directly involved in planning the police response to anti war protests in Wellington. Animal rights activists in Auckland were harassed and raided by members of the Auckland police Threat Assessment Unit, the same police officers who would later be involved in Operation 8.

We don't yet know all the details of when and how Operation 8 started, but for various reasons, police started following several Auckland activists in September 2006. Police were investigating a computer hacking incident against a political party website and decided that several people were going to threaten the Prime Minister. All of the suspects were also known to be supportive of Maori sovereignty issues.

Police from the Threat Assessment Unit eventually started paying serious attention to an Auckland activist. They followed him around over the course of several weeks to identify his house, place of work and the addresses of his associates. A detective phoned his workplace in order to obtain his cellphone numbers. They checked the power and phone company records in order to obtain the names of his flatmates. In November 2006, police were following the Auckland activist around and observing him shopping. After he left shops they entered and asked the shopkeepers about his spending habits, how often he shops, etc. Police also observed him driving around Auckland and visiting other addresses. They checked the power and phone company records of those addresses and obtained more names.

At this stage the police decided that the suspect might be meeting with others for a 'training camp' in the Ureweras. They decided to put a lot more effort into discovering what was going on and who else might be attending. A surveillance team was deployed into the forest to try to observe suspects at the alleged 'camp.'

Police also obtained search warrants so that Westpac and Kiwibank turned over full bank account records for several suspects. Warrants were served on Telecom and Vodafone so police could obtain full records of phone numbers, including the names of account holders, how often suspects rang certain numbers etc, all to build up a pattern of who associated with whom, and how well they knew each other.

Police also began obtaining records of text messages from the phone companies. This became a major part of the operation. Both Telecom and Vodafone store the contents of all text messages sent and received, and thousands of text messages were copied and supplied to the Police. Sifting through this information took months and months but gave police a lot of information about the suspects and their associates. Police suspected that a lot of people were attending "training camps" in the Ureweras, so attempted to identify everyone involved.

They did this by analysing the text messages. Police officers trawled through months of text messages sent and received by suspects and used these messages to identify everyone the suspects were in contact with. Police traced all the phone numbers that were in contact with the phones of the first suspects. Some were easily identified because the owner had given their names to the telephone company when they bought the phone. Others were identified because police read all their other texts and found names and home addresses in the text of the messages. Others were a bit harder to trace but police

went to great lengths to identify the owners of these phones in order to arrest them.

For example, to identify the person who used one number, police went through all the messages sent and received by that number, until they found one signed "From Dad." Then they traced that number, identified the owner, and checked government birth records to identify his children and then traced their addresses.

Another person was identified because the address supplied to Vodafone when the cellphone was bought seven years ago was linked in the police computer to an activist. A search of the police intelligence computer showed that the activist's name also showed up in the memories of two mobile phones seized in an unrelated case. This confirmed the identity and that person was raided on October 15th as police could prove that the person received a text message

In one case, police Googled a phone number and found a suspect's CV on the internet.

One woman was identified because her first name was used in a text message. Police had previously come across a person with the same first name, so checked the records of her landline. They found that phones belonging to other suspects had frequently called her number. She ended up spending a month in jail.

One suspect was only identified because several months earlier he had invited someone over to his house and included his full name and home address in the text message.

Physical surveillance of Auckland activists continued. When two suspects met at a café, again, a plainclothes detective sat at the next table and listened in on the conversation. Some police information was also received from informants, but we don't know the details of this yet.

In January 2007, Auckland activists were followed by car and on foot again, and one was observed shopping, and picking up passengers before driving for several hours to Whakatane where police observed him meeting up with other known activists who were also under surveillance. Police suspected another "training camp" so deployed police officers in the forest to observe the goings on all weekend. Hidden cameras were also installed overlooking bush tracks and roads so that suspects and their cars could be photographed.

Back at the head office, police continued analysing phone records as they came in each week from Telecom and Vodafone. Any names they found through phone records or car registrations were checked with police records, power company records and Internal Affairs (birth certificates, etc.) so that current home addresses could be identified. Some suspects were already on the police computer as well known protest organisers. One person was identified because he had previously given his cellphone number to Internal Affairs when applying for a passport. Another person was identified because a phone number discovered during the investigation was given to police a year earlier when the person

made a burglary complaint.

It's also very important to note that each text message sent also includes information identifying the phone handset (not just the SIM card) used, and the location of the cellphone towers nearest the sender and receiver of the message. So police were able to place suspects in certain towns on the dates they sent messages. One suspect changed his SIM card and phone number halfway through the surveillance but police could tell it was still him as he used the new SIM card in the same phone handset.

"Police asked customs to do a 'random search' and obtain details of who was picking him up from the airport. He was then followed as he left and the registration of the car that met him was recorded."

"A car used by a Wellington anarchist was towed from outside their house for no reason. Unknown to the car's owner, police had installed a listening device in the car before it was returned the next day."

By February 2007 police had obtained warrants to listen in on the phone calls of several suspects living around the North Island (up until this point they had not been listening, merely going through text message records). In March they obtained a warrant to put a listening device into the car of an Auckland suspect. The listening device recorded information which the police had to retrieve every few weeks or so, possibly by physically changing a tape or memory stick. It's likely that a tracking device was put into the car at the same time.

In April detectives followed this car and observed as it travelled around Auckland and on to Whakatane. At this stage surveillance cameras in the Bay of Plenty photographed a car linked to a Wellington activist, and text message analysis identified more suspects. Another person was identified because his cellphone was reported missing to the police several years ago and police therefore had a record linking his name to that phone number.

In June 2007 police had also intercepted and recorded conversations inside houses of activists and had installed a covert camera outside the house of an Auckland activist that photographed him and everyone else that went through his front gate.

Warrants were obtained under the Terrorism Suppression Act to place recording devices in two huts in the bush in the Ureweras. Police also attempted to install covert video cameras but these apparently failed.

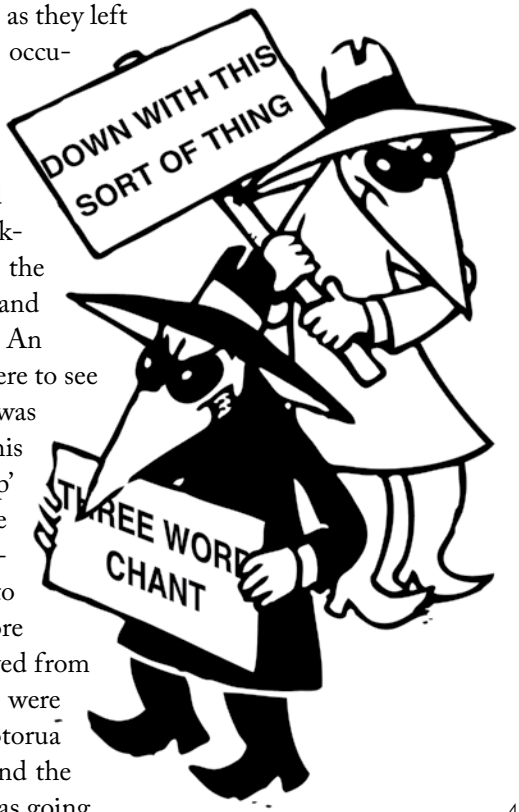
One activist in a small town in the North Island was followed from his house and watched while he made a call at a public payphone. Phone records were checked and police discovered the call was to the workplace of another suspect.

Meanwhile our Auckland activist was still under surveillance as he prepared for another trip south. The covert camera photographed him as he left his front door and packed bags into his car. A police team followed him as he drove around Auckland doing his shopping for the trip and picking up passengers. The car was then observed by waiting police as it passed through several towns in the central North Island. And of course all the conversa-

tions inside the car were being recorded for police to retrieve at a later date. Police also had several other addresses around the North Island under surveillance in case the occupants were travelling to the Bay of Plenty that day. At the alleged training camp that weekend, video cameras filmed people entering and leaving the bush, and conversations inside the bush huts were recorded by bugging devices. After the camp, police entered the huts to retrieve the recording devices.

By this time more suspects had been identified and were placed under surveillance. Another Auckland activist was observed by a team of police for an entire day as he met a friend at a kebab shop, went to post some mail, visited an internet café and then returned to his house.

On July 6th, Wellington police were outside the 128 Community house photographing suspects and vehicles as people entered and left the building. In August, police were again watching 128 and followed a car as it picked up passengers around Wellington and as it drove to Palmerston North and on to the Bay of Plenty. On the same day, police in Auckland and Hamilton were also following cars as they left for the Bay of Plenty. As cars arrived, covert cameras recorded the occupants and the registration numbers of everyone who used that road.



At least three activists had made separate overseas trips and were watched as they returned to New Zealand. One suspect was under surveillance as he came into Auckland airport. Police asked customs to do a 'random search' and obtain details of who was picking him up from the airport. He was then followed as he left and the registration of the car that met him was recorded. Air New Zealand kindly supplied the detective with the suspect's ticket details as well. An anarchist flew into Wellington airport from overseas. Police were there to see who picked her up and followed the car to 128. Another activist was photographed as he arrived at an airport as police wanted to prove his backpack looked like one that was allegedly worn at a 'training camp'

An Auckland activist moved house at this point, and police were there to confirm his new address. A car used by a Wellington anarchist was towed from outside their house for no reason. Unknown to the car's owner, police had installed a listening device in the car before it was returned the next day. Another Wellington activist was followed from her home to a railway station and observed catching a bus. Police were waiting at the Taupo bus terminal and watched her get on the Rotorua bus. In Rotorua police were waiting again and photographed her and the person who picked her up, then followed the car to see where she was going.

Police suspected a 'training camp' was going to take place in September so again, addresses of suspects all over the North Island were under surveillance by teams of police ready to follow cars all over the North Island. Bank records were obtained to show where suspects used their bankcards in order to identify where they where on those dates.

By this stage police had convinced themselves that up to 50 people had been taking part in 'terrorist training camps' in preparation for an armed uprising and the assassination of politicians (including George Bush!).

On Monday, October 15th 2007, more than 300 police carried out dawn raids on dozens of houses all over Aotearoa / New Zealand. Police claim the raids were in response to 'concrete terrorist threats' from indigenous activists. The reality, however, included heavily armed police terrorising an entire township. To date, no evidence of the so-called terrorist plot has been revealed.

Police arrested 17 indigenous, anarchist, environmental and anti-war activists, including people from Tuhoe, Te Atiawa, Maniopoto, Nga Puhi and Pakeha. Police wanted to charge 12 people under the Terrorism Suppression Act (TSA), however the Solicitor-General denied the police permission to proceed. After four weeks in jail everyone was released on bail.

During the raids, police seized dozens of computers and cellphones (containing details identifying more phone numbers and names) and questioned more suspects and their friends and relatives. Unfortunately, some of these people (including some who definitely should have known better) have made statements to the police, which have been used to identify and harass more people. Police would also have listened to phone conversations and watched the reaction as news spread of the raids, and as activists planned solidarity and support for the arrestees.

On Tuesday, February 19th 2007, police raided further properties, arresting three more men. All were released on bail with strict conditions that same day. Twenty people

are facing charges under the Arms Act, in a trial that could take several years. Although out of jail, they have very strict bail conditions that deny them freedom of movement and association.

Operation 8 is still ongoing. The police are still listening in on your phone calls and reading your text messages. They are still bugging cars, phones and houses connected with Maori and anarchist activists. Unfortunately it doesn't end with Operation 8.

The reality we have to face is that anyone involved in radical politics or direct action should expect to be under surveillance. Dozens of detectives are now employed fulltime in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and other towns, to monitor 'potential terrorists,' which means Tino Rangatiratanga activists, anarchists, socialists, radical environmentalists and animal rights activists. In fact, pretty much anyone who disagrees with the system and is working towards real change, especially if it involves direct action of any sort.

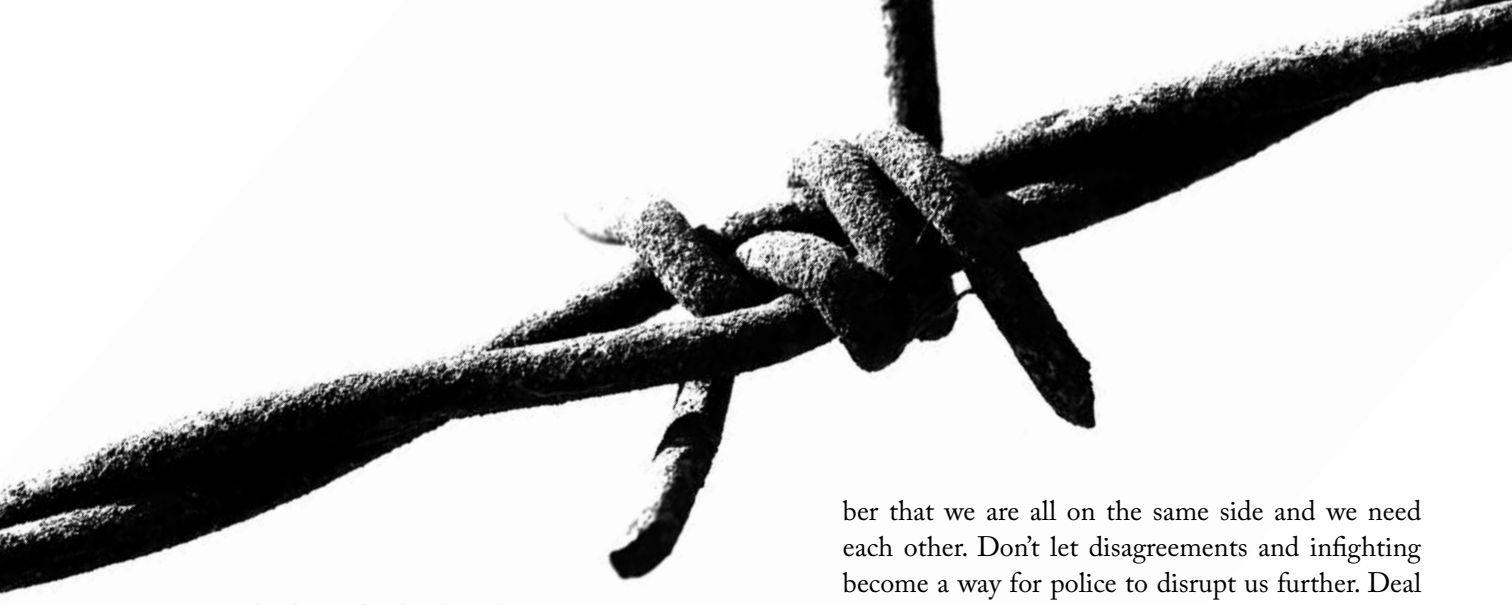
Corporate intelligence is also an issue. Any campaign (no matter how moderate) directed at hurting the profits or reputation of a large company should expect to be monitored or infiltrated by private investigators. We have all heard of the Thompson & Clark Investigations who put spies into activist groups in Christchurch and Wellington, but there are dozens of other corporate security and intelligence firms operating in New Zealand.

We are being watched because they consider us to be a threat. We need to stop underestimating ourselves. Too often, local activists are lazy because they think nobody is bothered by our activities. The state and corporations are extremely bothered by our campaigns and movements. Not all of them and not all the time, but they are worried, and they do put a big effort into watching us. We should see Operation 8 as a wake up call.

Being put under surveillance is now a fact of life for the political activist. It is actually a sign that you are being taken seriously so it is not always something to be too concerned about. It is certainly not being paranoid to think it could never happen. It does, and much more regularly than is supposed, though not often in a systematic manner.

All activists, and even individuals only connected on the periphery of a group or campaign, will be watched at some stage, including active surveillance of their lives. The main purpose in doing this is to build up a profile on people so there is at least a basic file on you (e.g. name and up-to-date address to go with a photograph) and so they have a good idea how you fit into the organisation or group they are targeting. And also whether you are worth a closer look (a reason would be hanging out with other activists who are known to be involved in covert actions or organising). High profile activists, especially outspoken ones, will be under regular surveillance as a matter of routine. Most others will have periodic surveillance as the State seek to update their intelligence and profiles. The mistake is to think that surveillance only happens prior to actions or arrests.

We need to be much more security conscious than we have been. And this means everyone in-



volved in radical political campaigns or groups, even if you don't think you are doing anything dodgy or illegal. We need to stay active and stay safe. There's no perfect way to do this but we should be thinking about security precautions in everything we do.

As a bare minimum, everyone in our movements/groups should:

1. Learn their legal rights, and be aware of how to handle police interrogation and arrest. You have the right to remain silent, use it. It is NEVER OK to make any statement to the police that incriminates another activist.

2. Know that they should never ever speculate, gossip or talk about any particular activists involvement in any illegal actions.

3. Know that you should never discuss or plan illegal or sensitive stuff over the phone or in a car or house. If you don't want the police to know, don't say it where they can listen.

4. Stick together. Our groups often suffer from infighting, stupid feuds and internal problems. We also suffer from sexual abuse and violence problems in our scene. Throughout all this we need to remember that we are all on the same side and we need each other. Don't let disagreements and infighting become a way for police to disrupt us further. Deal with problems rather than letting them fester and weaken the group.

More generally we should be making it difficult for police to gain information on our movements. If the police raided your house today, what would they find? Do we really need to keep a list of names and phone numbers on a piece of paper next to the phone. Does your diary have details of every meeting and protest you went to this year recorded in it? Do you keep sensitive information on your computer? Have you got encryption software like PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) so you can communicate securely by email? Do we really need to have that Facebook or Myspace page with our real names, contact details, political opinions and links to all our friends publicly available on the internet for all to see.

Activist groups and campaigns should discuss security as a group and plan how to minimize the effects of surveillance, spies and police harassment. Everyone involved should take part in this discussion, from veterans to new volunteers, and the discussion needs to be ongoing. Mailing list data-

bases and other sensitive information should ideally be encrypted and kept in a secure location. Group offices should be secure and not open to random strangers to come in and access everything. Contact lists should not be left lying around after meetings. And, we should discuss the difficult issue of dealing with infiltrators and spies. Activists in Christchurch and Wellington have found corporate spies in their groups and it will happen again.

This article is aimed at showing how much effort the police are putting into watching us, and starting a conversation on how we can minimise the effects of this. We should all start talking about this in our groups as it's going to be an ongoing reality for all of us. Ⓐ

Further information:

http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/94/7david.htm
During protests against a 1996 APEC globalisation conference, Christchurch activist David Small caught SIS agents breaking into the home of fellow activist Aziz Choudry. The police responded by raiding Small's house looking for 'bombs." Small sued the Christchurch Police and the case revealed information on how police intelligence worked in New Zealand. This article is slightly longwinded but worth a read.

http://www.activistsecurity.org/
Download and reprint this book by UK based activists. A very comprehensive guide to security for all activists, includes campaign security, personal security, doing direct action, avoiding police surveillance, dealing with informants and undercover cops, etc.

http://security.resist.ca/personal/
Canadian website with lots of info on mainly direct action security, and computer stuff. The site is a few years out of date but still worthwhile.

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fuck me like the whore i am*

– Charlotte Wilde

It's the day after I started to work as a hooker in Germany. And everywhere in Kreuzburg there's this poster – big hard-edged text on white ground – "FUCK ME LIKE THE WHORE I AM." It's almost as big as me, lining the alleyway.

There's three things about this poster that piss me off most. The first is that it suggests passivity and things being done to you, not by you. The second is that it suggests there is a particular way whores like to be fucked, which is rough, violent and frequently. It loads desire for this kind of sex with moral judgement – if you like to have lots of sex, rough(er) sex or are not monogamous, then you are a whore. That is, lower on that social ladder than anyone else – lower than women in general, queers, people with mental illnesses, immigrants – the list goes on. This social ordering and control of sexuality is not only repeatedly enforced by men but almost every-



one, on a daily basis though media, popular culture, graffiti on the street, personal relationships and interactions.

The maker of these posters is not actually asking you to consider sexualities and desires of sex workers, but producing a reinforcement of moral and sexual codes. I'm not sure of his actual intention other than to provoke (it was however a work sponsored by a large corporation and was supposed to connect to Berlin Fashion Week) – I suspect that mostly he just got off on it and didn't think about it so much. This text is my reply; a reply to how I, a somewhat queer, immigrant sex worker, like to fuck; a reply to the 'whore I am.'

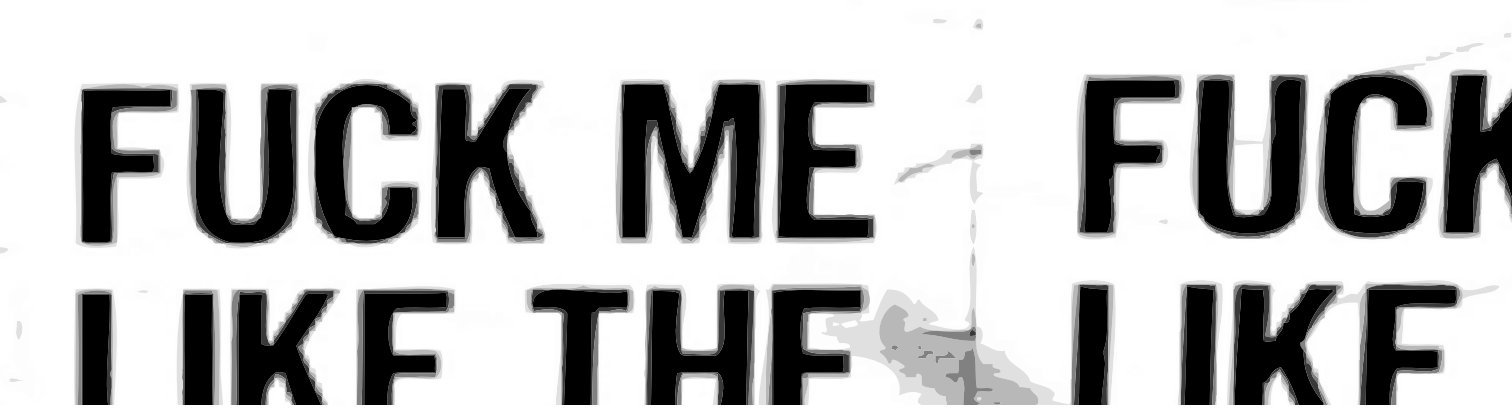
I am speaking only for myself and about my own experiences. I want to make this clear because discussions about sex work are dominated by people speaking for others – usually politicians, lobby groups, academics, film makers etc and only seldom involve us, the subjects being talked about. Within these discussions we are often asked to believe that the experience of one sex worker is the same as someone else's. My experiences in an upper class bordello are not only different to someone working the streets of the Reeperbahn, different to transgender sex workers or someone in Madrid, they're different to even my closest co-workers. Our motivations, histories, desires and feelings are our own. Which doesn't mean they are isolated and without connections – only that it's both dangerous and damaging to extrapolate.

The whore I am

I started sex work to escape the islands I grew up in (Aotearoa New Zealand) not due to economic necessity but a mixture of love and (queer + gender) politics. I am in Germany because I want to be.

My invisibility in Germany, contrary to the invisibility of migrants without papers, is one born of privilege. It is the privilege of white skin, and, until I open my mouth and speak, looking like I might 'belong here.' And even then its not so bad – my accent is hard to place, causing more confusion than prejudice. I have university degrees; I have residence and work papers. I'm telling you this not to deny the very real and painful experiences of others, but because I want to acknowledge my own circumstances.

To conceive myself as an immigrant sex worker means to step outside the usual racist, classist and sexist stereotypes, which tells us immigrant sex workers are without legal documents, from poor



east European/African states, without agency, here by force, abused, tricked into it. A conception which promotes even stronger border control in general and control of women in particular. It casts us as helpless and naïve, unable to make decisions for ourselves, needing to be saved – like always. Makes it wrong to desire to step outside culture and 'homeland,' wrong to step outside of our good-girl gender roles into something else. If I as a western migrant can work as a hooker, why are eastern migrants denied same autonomy?

It's not like I am a 'good migrant.' It's not that I'm here because Germany is rich, powerful, giving more job possibilities as my home country. I'm not here to integrate, behave myself or obey the law. I'm here to destroy it. I'm here because I'm in love with the people trying to build something else. I like its gaps and holes and I want to make more.

And I wonder, if I don't fit into this conception of what a migrant sex worker is, how many other people don't fit either?

Fuck me like

Just like I am not selling my body, I don't get fucked by my clients – I fuck them. I also whip them, tie them up, piss on them, touch them gently, talk to them, hold their hands if they want it. If I want it. The common relationship in all these situations is that I have agency. I'm always in control of the game, even if it is one of devote/sub/passive, which I can stop or modify at any moment I choose.

And I do get a lot of the SM submissive jobs at work – not only because, yes, I like a good spanking sometimes – but because I learn more than if I am being always the Dominant. I like the leaps of faith required, being pushed into new experiences, I like the moments of fear and moving through them. Figuring out my limits and moving them how I want.

This goes beyond physical limits and into limits of fear. To be more concrete, there was my appointment with Henry,* who did far more for me than I did for him. Henry is kind of young and small with soft eyes. He is scared at first to play the game because of gaps in language. He is to be the dominant, me the sub. For me, his concern is a sign I will have no problem with him, that he will pay attention to my boundaries. When someone is unclear about what they want and unclear about communication then things can become unsafe. The game we are playing is a game of ropes. I am naked, they cross my body like an animal, like something living, re-

tied over and over again. My wrists are always bound though, he binds me slowly but there's a rhythm to it, I am breathing fast. I am afraid of my wrists being tied together, of anything tight around my wrist. This fear has held me for more than a year when I broke my wrist, I have had overwhelming fear of police, that my wrist will break again as they arrest me. Now I am slowing my breathing down, I am feeling the rope against my wrist and knowing I can ask him to untie me at the moment I choose. I am concentrating on my wrist and how it feels. My whole body is bound now. I stay this way for 30 minutes while he ties the ropes in different ways.

When the ropes come slowly off my body I realise that my fear is coming off too. I see my wrist and it feels strong and I have no fear for the first time in one year.

At work I get distracted by thoughts of texts I want to write and porn I want to make.

In my breaks I curl up on the sofa in my underwear and high heel shoes, think about smoking cigarettes but stop myself, think about the holes starting to appear in my stockings and study German. There is a German grammar book which always seems to be laying about on the coffee table, I can't figure out who it belongs to. I try to pick up the stuff I missed at school last week – Konjunktiv 11 – Indirect / irreale rede.

The game is not over

Sometimes the borders scratch and smudge a bit.

At home under my black hoodie and Ungdomshuset t-shirt is expensive underwear and the lingering smell of perfume. Makeup not quite washed off, the black smudged around my eyes. My body is marked. It is not a neutral body – I am everywhere shaved, I have marks on me from a SM appointment the day before, and I haven't looked so femme since I was 17.

I have secret crushes on the streetworkers of Oranienburgerstrasse.

I like it this way.

On my way home from work I watch the empty spaces of Berlin through the train windows, so scratched away with names the scene becomes shapes and light. *I am here, I exist.* Coded messages on the glass and walls and rusted metal fences outside. Territorial scenes from the night before. Crossing from the West part of the city to the East, half defensive (I'm exhausted, but I can't relax here) half watching the performances of gender and cultural identity play out across from me. Watching their enforcement. Watching my reflection blurring in the window.

I am here. Blurry and without defined territory. I like it this way. Ⓐ

*Name altered to protect the not-so-innocent.


RELAX
DONT!
BAYER
NOVA
ORDE

Credit: Isabelle Gauthier

From the Streets to the Cells and Back Again

– Em

Just as the sun was about to rise on October 15th 2007, my partner and I were woken by men shouting and crashing through the bush, their dog barking crazily and several torches attached to big, black M16 assault rifles blaring in our faces.

We were handcuffed and removed, from my tent home in Wellington city's townbelt, at gunpoint, by the New Zealand Armed Offenders Squad. Fifteen other people across Aotearoa, including my brothers and several of my friends, were also taken away. At least sixty houses were busted open and raided. A whole town further north was blockaded, searched and interrogated at gunpoint. The armed offenders squad even took my thirteen year old dog to the pound and told them to put her down as I would not be back to collect her (my animal rights friends rescued her the next day thankfully). Random raids, call-ins and arrests still continue as I write this.

I and the other sixteen arrested and slammed in jail that day, were charged with 'unlawful possession of weapons' under the Arms Act. The charges were based on evidence the NZ police had gathered for almost two years by bugging phones and cars, placing hidden cameras outside homes, following people, laying informants and more, allowed under the new Terrorism Suppression Act laws – for which we were told we would also be charged under. Terrorism charges in NZ carry a maximum twelve year jail sentence and possible deportation to Guantanamo Bay. I had never been to prison before.

One of my best friends and I were locked up in solitary for a week next to each other at Arohata Women's prison. It was a small concrete cell with a camera, a bed, a toilet and several trashy women's magazines with a cage outside that opened for a few hours a day to let us shower. We were fed three times a day through

a slot in the door and monitored every thirty minutes. Sometimes they would forget to turn the lights off at night or forget to give us our mail. The second week we persuaded them to let us into mainstream where conditions were not much better but at least you could be with other people during 'unlock.' The third week we were handcuffed, put on a plane with two guards each and taken to another, bigger prison up north.

Prison was a huge emotional and mental lesson for us and a rare and invaluable insight into our (in)justice system and it's tools of psychological and physical control. Of all the prisoners we met, probably 95% of them were Maori, Islander or another non-white skin colour. Most were poor, ill-informed, unsupported and/or rejected by our so-called 'fair society.' Most of the guards had similar demographics. I was appalled at how prisoners were treated. Prison laws are completely arbitrary, changing from one guard to the next. If you have no money in prison you can work if you're lucky for about 15c an hour. Parents often lose their children, partners, homes and livelihoods while they're locked up. Yet this country builds more and more prisons to fill the quotas. It's "good business" they say, while people's lives are destroyed for their profits.

I can't speak much about our court case as we are still going through the courts but of the 17 arrested we were mostly all environmentalists, anti-war activists, unionists and /or indigenous activists. Many of us were well known and thankfully had lots of support from family, friends and other noisy activists. Protests sprang up across the country and even overseas in cities like London, Mexico City, Berlin, Montreal and Melbourne.

After 26 days in jail, the NZ Solicitor-General made a decision not to charge us for terrorism and we were released on bail the next day. (It's an election year this year and the current government's polls dropped dramatically during the protests.)

THIS WAS ALL A FEW MONTHS AGO NOW and since then I have been trying to piece some semblance of a normal life back together. We are all on strict bail conditions still, such as having to report to the police every week, having passports withheld, having non-association orders with friends, family and/or colleagues and restrictions of movement within NZ. Nineteen of us are now facing weapons charges with a four year maximum jail sentence and my co-accused partner faces possible deportation as well. The lawyers expect the trial to take place next year sometime and take around two months. After then who knows what will happen to us…

So yeah, at the moment I've been doing things I thought a lot about when I was in prison (fearing twelve years of isolation from everything I love). I spend more time with my friends and family now and try to be around my dog more often. I'm trying to be around cops and possible bugged spaces *less* often. I also took a long needed break and quit my usual activism for a while to do something I've always talked about doing since I was little: going 'home.'

Over summer I moved up to my Maori family's old village of Parihaka in Taranaki and started

helping out in the community food gardens and getting to understand my history, the people's struggles and their ways of surviving all these generations since colonisation and before. It's a totally different world. Away from all the noise, cars, concrete, speed and hegemonic, capitalist culture of the city there is a beautiful depth and tenuous permanence to everything in the country that dissolves your ideas of individual wants and needs. You can feel the pain that years of deforestation, cow farming and fossil-fuel exploration has given to the land, rivers and sea. You can feel the pain that years of invasion, land theft, war, imprisonment, humiliation and pollution of the people has left, hurting generation after generation. The land and people still struggle to live together but the bonds grow weaker and weaker as the cities and money drag us apart.

I have a lot to learn still... and even more to do, in helping solve that huge, huge problem.

For now, I missed my friends too much and the resources of the city, necessary for my usual activism. Last week I moved back to Wellington for the year. Priority one – stay out of jail and stop my partner being deported. Priority two – finish my film project on grassroots solutions for global sustainability and self-determination (started over 5 years ago!). Priority three – stay sane and healthy by managing my life better and getting out of the city more often. Priority four – learn te reo maori so I can better understand and help my people. Priority five – continue the struggle with the other activist projects I'm involved in, including our community building project, our infoshop, our anti-mining campaign, anarchist and self-determination struggles, prisoner support work, and helping to grow food and reforest the stream banks at Parihaka when I visit regularly now.

Yeah, as a good friend warned me, perhaps I need to move priority three up the list a bit? We'll see though. I need activism to keep me sane and healthy too. If I've gotta go back to jail sometime soon then at least I will have made the most of my time 'outside' having fun and helping more of us and the planet to be free.

Kia kaha, kia toa, kia manawanui. (Be strong, be brave, be big-hearted)

Na Em. Ⓐ

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A Critique of NGOism

– Francie

I've spent three years heavily involved in the Save Happy Valley campaign,[1] over a period of time where the 'climate change debate' has come to prominence in the political sphere, and the last year and a half working in a paid position at SAFE.[2] Both have set me thinking about the way non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operate and their role in reinforcing the status quo.

I've also thought lots about the recent Greenpeace campaign *Be The Change*. NGOs often mirror the very transnational corporations they claim to oppose, engage in self-promotion and reduce 'activism' to donating money or spending it ethically. They create 'campaigns' that, by definition, fail to tackle structural problems. This article is a necessarily brief and preliminary exploration of these key issues, but I hope simply to continue a conversation on what we might want organising in Aotearoa to look like.

Mirroring Transnational Corporations

> Few indeed are the charities that have deliberately put themselves out of business. On the contrary, a few – almost all in the rich world, and particularly in the US – have gone global and grown so vast as to acquire an identity all of their own: 'bingos.' It's as if we'd regressed to the days of the grand imperial charities of Victorian Britain, or the foundations of the American robber barons like Carnegie and Rockefeller...
>
> The inescapable effect is to remove human agency from the people who are supposed to benefit from their work...
>
> [BINGOs] have become powerful, self-righteous institutions, focused intently on the positive. Their revenues and assets now run into hundreds of millions, even billions, of dollars. They employ thousands of staff in dozens of countries. Efficiency and professionalism outrank commitment and insight in avowedly 'corporate' cultures. Branding is everything. Image is priceless. Growth is good. Bit by bit, the interests of the institution merge with those of its 'stakeholders' and 'customers' – so that all can expand quite happily together, in size or number as appropriate. **(New Internationalist)**[3]

Even New Internationalist, that stalwart of NGOist 'radical'-liberal journalism, critiques Big International NGOs.[4] This article will contend that much of the same critique – and a broader one – can apply for NGOs of any size, and for NGOist activism. Activists organising either inside, or in ways that reflect and intersect

1 'Campaign to save a West Coast valley from open-cast coal mining' by the state owned enterprise Solid Energy. Started 2004, ongoing. www.savehappyvalley.org.nz

2 Second largest animal welfare organisation in New Zealand, with a more rights based focus than the RSPCA. 'Actively involved in campaigns to protect the welfare of all animals.' Setup over 75 years ago. www.safe.org.nz

3 Ransom, D. 2005. 'The Big Charity Bonanza,' *New Internationalist,* Issue 383. Retrieved 3/4/08 from http://newint.org/features/2005/10/01/keynote/

4 Big international NGOs are 'tax-exempt' (charitable) international organizations, or 'non-profits,' that have gone transnational.

with,[5] the NGO structure and politics may not be World Vision or Greenpeace but still generally reinforce the status quo.

Many BINGOs operate without borders. They go into areas without knowledge of the different ways people do things in those places, and without knowledge of the situation there. This also occurs within Aotearoa where, for example, environmental organisations will ask who's polluting the land but not whose land they stand on. They design campaigns to fulfil their own NGO agenda, rather than a community based one. This distorts existing community work by appropriating community issues.

NGOs generally operate with a corporate structure (e.g. with a Director, a hierarchical pay scale and a corresponding hierarchy of decision making power). Often, it is marketing managers who get to determine what campaigns can be run and thus what changes the NGO hopes to work towards. Even NGOs that were originally set up with a radical purpose increasingly mirror the transnational corporations / government / system they intended to resist. Direct cooption (e.g. membership on governmental committees, consultation meetings with corporate boards, and compromises with and funding from oppressive agents) is best resisted by a collective strength, solidarity and decision making process. These, again, are undermined by a corporate structure. We are concerned about TNCs, capital and the state, and surely we should be concerned about these NGOist trends too.

5 A similar notion to that of 'careerist activism.'

NGO Promotion and the defining of activism as money

In 2007, Greenpeace Aotearoa New Zealand, in conjunction with Forest & Bird[6] and Oxfam (both conservative NGOs) organised *Be The Change*.[7] This included a webforum where people could register to 'be counted as someone who has joined the fight against climate change,' make pledges for actions they would take to 'help stop climate chaos,' submit suggestions for new pledges, and a bus tour up the country that included school talks. The focus was on things people could do as individuals to 'reduce [their] contribution to climate change.'[8] This reduces activism to recycling your cans, turning

6 Of the 'Treaty of Waitangi claim (WAI262) against the New Zealand government over native flora, fauna, traditional knowledge, and intellectial property,' Choudry writes: 'Several non-Maori environmental NGOs opposed this Maori Treaty claim, notably the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, viewing themselves and the New Zealand government to be the rightful guardians of Aotearoa/New Zealand's biodiversity'! He asks why trust 'a neoliberal state that had privatised, commodified, and commercialised as much of the country as it could, instead of Indigenous Peoples that continued to protect what remained of their territories' biodiversity.' (Choudry, A. 2007, *Transnational Activist Coalition Politics and the De/Colonisation of Pedagogies of Mobilisation: Learning from Anti-neoliberal Indigenous Movement Articulations*, p. 109).

7 I am using *Be The Change* as an example both because it is a succinct way to explain a critique of NGOism, and because I came across it time and again as a result of my own involvement in work against coal mining.

8 *Become the solution. Be the change.* Greenpeace 2007. Retrieved 14/04/08 from http://www.bethechange.org.nz/

off your lights, or buying a hybrid car (and in other campaigns, buying free range eggs, wearing a little "Make Poverty History" wristband, or boycotting Nestle[9]).

Consumer based action simply reinforces the capitalist market-based economic system we live under. It strengthens the neoliberal premise that the individual is god, and that you have a 'choice' about everything.[10] In framing and narrating things this way, NGOs like Greenpeace and SAFE obscure the fact that it is industry and the state that perpetuate the appalling treatment of animals, and the desecration of the environment, and obscure the connection between these and all other forms of exploitation. By turning to market based 'solutions,' NGOs simply reinforce the very structures that have created the problems, and muddy the view for those who may want to try and look at things differently.

Consumer based actions are ineffective at changing the root causes of climate change, exploitation of animals, disparities in wealth, or baby milk marketing. They don't challenge oppression. Rather, I would contend that a large component of the impetus behind a campaign like *Be The Change* is to raise the profile of the NGO, and directly, or indirectly, raise funds. I have sat in on conversations at SAFE where the entire premise of the conversation has been profile and branding. I have perpetuated it myself, at Save Happy Valley meetings where I've said of an otherwise ineffective action or expenditure, "oh well, at least we get our name out there." Self-promotion and fundraising are allowed to outweigh the importance of the issue, or of an analysis of what is and is not an effective strategy.

Recently I was in a conversation with a key staff member at SAFE who candidly said: "all we do these days is raise profile and raise awareness." In the discussion that followed he outlined the logic as to why he continues to do this even though it would be easy to find it appalling. Animal rights organisations can challenge the Government but the Government doesn't care. Business can pay for infinitely more lobbying time than an NGO can. Even the 'phasing out of cages' that has been 'achieved' so far doesn't mean anything. Millions of hens will continue to live out their short lives in appalling conditions, locked inside cages that are a little bit bigger and have 'enhanced' features like one perch. SAFE, here, chooses to turn to consumer action (e.g. encouraging people to avoid battery hen eggs, promoting veganism), and this is 'achieved' through raising awareness, including raising profile.

Obviously, this is based on a view of the state as

9 Many of these (such as boycotts) also reinforce the myth that the market runs on supply and demand. In reality, the market is shaped by a range of factors, including the creation of artifial demand (e.g. advertising) and artificially inflating real demand, e.g. through subsidies, or making products that will break in a year or two. This is especially relevant in the animal rights 'movement,' which is currently encouraging people to go vegetarian for the environment. In reality, millions of tonnes of meat gets disposed of ever year, so not eating a few kilograms of it won't change the initial production.

10 Cookson, L., anti-globalisation activist (GATT Watchdog, Corso, Arena) personal communication, Christchurch, 26/09/07

Counting marketable achievements such as how many leaflets were distributed, or the quantity of funds raised, prevents us from reflecting on what changes have been achieved, or the strength of our resistance to corporates or government, or, more realistically, from analysing our effectiveness long-term in a struggle against power that isn't meant to come with quarterly 'successes.'

neutral arbiter (or at least relies on that construct whether or not it is believed). It also falls back to consumer activism. NGOism tends to do exactly this, limiting the options to either lobbying the state or reinforcing neoliberal capitalism. Aid agencies like World Vision use poster children to individualise issues, obscure any political analysis, promote a simple process of guilt then abdication of guilt, and conjure pity rather than compassion[11] for the people pictured.

The obsession with funds displayed by World Vision and across the board is repulsive. There are entire jobs in NGOs based on fundraising, street-collecting, grant applications, securing corporate sponsorship and membership recruitment. Although giving money may be a good way for people to support a movement they cannot be as actively involved in as they want, it cannot be the focus of change. Whether NGOs seek funding from large corporates that resemble their opposition, or from government agencies, or from well-off individual benefactors, the logic is the same: 'wealthy people should be the donors, and thus, inevitably, the controllers of social justice struggles.'[12]

At SAFE over recent years, there has been a shift so that the entire purpose of membership is now to make money. Had I continued my employment, I would have begun work in membership recruitment: that is, ringing recently lapsed members asking "Do you want to stay on the membership database?"

"No."

"Then Goodbye."

"Oh, yes, I do actually."

"Then pay up, ideally as regular giver."

"Look, I love your work but I really can't afford the $40/year membership.."

"Well....Membership is about to increase. You see, ideally each of our members would be contributing $120 per annum. We'll change you to a non member but we'll be watching to see if you make a donation. And if you don't within four months, then you're gone."

There was to be no option to keep sending them campaign information (these are ex-members after all, people who have made at least a financial, and often an actual contribution to SAFE's work), and maybe drop old supporters who hadn't made any contact for years. I was told, no, the purpose is not to cut costs, it is to increase income. This is from an organisation that has had an exponential increase in the money it draws in from it's annual appeal, now over $165,000 per annum.

11 A distinction drawn in Arendt, H. (1977) *On Revolution.* New York: Penguin.

12 Smith, A. 2007. 'Introduction' in in INCITE! Women of Colour Against Violence (eds), *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded.* South End Press, Cambridge. p. 9

To put it simply, SAFE wanted members for their money. So, a 'membership recruiter' like me would be asking someone to fork out $120 a year so that I could continue being employed to chase them up for the $120 for the next year. It is not that SAFE wanted the money to do good work, including having an actively engaged membership in cities across the country who could do campaign support / stalls / education, or even individual members who could at least write letters, run film nights, or find out about a vivisection lab nearby (let alone autonomous local groups taking direct action or intersecting resistance to animal abuse with other struggles). The argument is obnoxious for its cicularity.

When you work in an NGO office, you hear of volunteers complaining that the key 'achievements' are all about money, that people on the street complain you are not doing enough, that other people in the so-called 'movement' you are in are critiquing you for going liberal or for selling them out. Maybe it's about time the people inside these NGOs listened up. Indeed, 'to radically change society, we must build mass movements that can topple systems of donimation, such as capitalism. However, the NPIC [Non-Profit Industrial Complex] encourages us to think of social justice organising as a career; that is, you do the work if you can get paid for it. However a mass movement requires the involvement of millions of people.'[13]

Counting marketable achievements such as how many leaflets were distributed, or the quantity of funds raised, prevents us from reflecting on what changes have been achieved, or the strength of our resistance to corporates or government, or, more realistically, from analysing our effectiveness longterm in a struggle against power that isn't meant to come with quarterly 'successes.' Aziz Choudry (2007) writes, of the recurring pattern whereby non-Indigenous activists and organisations tend 'to only support Indigenous People's sruggles during visible crises: Many scholarly, NGO and activist accounts fail to recognise the significance of low-key, long-haul political education and community organising work, which goes on "below the radar" of externally located observers, who base their theories and understandings on websites, media reports, the activities and statements of large, well-resourced NGOs, and apparent "explosions."'[14]

Arguably, the only prominent activity that people are encouraged (by NGOs and many activists) to make an active, longterm commitment to is, scarily, 'consumer activism.' In addition to the criticisms perviously noted, buying your way into 'solutions' such as GE Free, organics, or a hybrid car is only an option for a very small subset of people. Likewise, insulating your home is only available to those who can afford it – and who owns their own home these days anyway? From the beginnings of 'Fair Trade' promoted by entities like Trade Aid, to the niche marketing of fair trade coffee / sugar / cocoa, to actions promoted by the Green Party, to veganism, to anarcha-feminists making their own pads, to much of the "top 10 things you can do to save the planet" that define the green movement, spending your money 'ethically' is promoted as a political action. I contend it couldn't be further from one!

13 Smith, A. 2007. 'Introduction' in in INCITE! Women of Colour Against Violence (eds), *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*. South End Press, Cambridge. p. 10

14 Choudry, 2007. p. 110

Failing to tackle the structural issues

> The existence of offset schemes presents the public with an opportunity to take a 'business as usual' attitude to the climate change threat. Instead of encouraging individuals and institutions to profoundly change consumption patterns as well as social, economic and political structures, we are being asked to believe that paying a little extra for certain goods and services is sufficient. For example, if one is willing to pay a bit more for 'offset petrol' one doesn't have to worry about how much is consumed, because the price automatically includes offsetting the emissions it produces.
>
> [There are] problems with the impermanence of carbon storage in plantations, and ... hypothesising what emissions have been avoided by renewable energy projects and emissions reduction schemes amounts to little more than guesswork. **(Carbon Trade Watch).**[15]

> Offsets allow extraction of oil, coal and gas to continue, which in turn increases the amount of fossil carbon that is released into the active carbon pool disrupting the cycle. That is why campaigners argue that genuine solutions to climate change require us to keep fossil carbon (oil, coal and gas) in the ground. **(New Internationalist).**[16]

> Imagine that someone came up with a brilliant new campaign against smoking. It would show graphic images of people dying of lung cancer followed by the punchline: "It's easy to be healthy – smoke one less cigarette a month."
>
> We know without a moment's reflection that this campaign would fail. The target is so ludicrous, and the disconnection between the images and the message is so great, that most smokers would just laugh it off. **(George Marshall).**[17]

There are some useful and concise critiques of carbon trading schemes and carbon offsetting available on the internet, including the three just cited. I won't elaborate further on their content; suffice to say that both carbon trading and carbon offsetting are 'pressure valve release' strategies designed by industry to kid us into believing that climate change is being addressed while capitalism continues unchallenged. Just like many see through the 'carbon sequestration' greenwash that Solid Energy pump out, so too must we see through biofuels, green account-

15 Carbon Trade Watch. 2007. *The Carbon Neutral Myth: Offset Inudlgences for your Climate Sins.* Retrieved 14/04/08 from http://www.carbontradewatch.org/pubs/carbon_neutral_myth.pdf

16 Jutta Kill. 2006. '10 Things You Should Know About Tree Offsets,' *New Internationalist*, Issue No. 391, Retrieved 14/04/08 from http://www.newint.org/issues/2006/07/01/

17 George Marshall. 2007. 'Can this really save the planet?,' *The Guardian*, 13 Sept 2007. Retrieved 14/04/08 from http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2007/sep/13/ethicalliving.climatechange

ing, carbon neutrality, the state's commitment to climate change, CarboNZero and so forth. These are all designed to reinforce neoliberal capitalism.

Meridian spouts greenwash and it's irritating.[18] Greenpeace spouts greenwash – for example by publishing magnets that encourage people to switch to Meridian – and people buy it. When it comes to framing, corporate NGOs are worse in some ways than industry. They take up all the public space and cause severe damage. The Government must be laughing itself silly that Greenpeace paid for a tour around the country that effectively told people to do what the Government's policy says: take individual action, it's okay, the state is responsive to public lobbying, we're dealing with climate change and we'll mitigate everything else. People either buy into this (with their new light bulbs or their monthly donation), or they can see how cynical and self-engaged NGOs are and so they disengage. Either way, nothing changes. For an example of the ludicrous nature of suggestions to address climate change that fail to mention collectively resisting capitalism: in the United Kingdom,[19] WWF states that 'CO2 emissions would be reduced by 0.45 million tonnes... if everyone put an insulation jacket on their hot water tank'[20] [emphasis added]. That was all of 0.45 million tonnes. Yet in 2006, 557 million tonnes of Carbon dioxide were emitted (and that excludes Land Use Change and Forestry,



18 Meridian claims to have certified 'carbon neutral electricity.' They are currently seeking resource consent for the Mokihinui dam on the West Coast which would create a 14km long lake up this amazing river. Their transmission line would cut across 29km including through Happy Valley in the upper Waimangaroa Valley (http://www.meridianenergy.co.nz/Our-Projects/Mokihinuihydroproposal/default.htm). Even GE giant Monsanto claims to be "reducing agriculture's impact on our environment" (http://www.monsanto.com/).

19 Home of companies like Carbon Neutral Company, and activist groups like Plane Stupid.

20 http://www.wwf.org.uk/researcher/issues/climatechange/0000000006.asp#17

plus Methane and Nitrous Oxide emissions).[21]

So just like we must ask, what are NGOs conveying when their 'campaigns' are premised around money; we must also ask, what does it say if anyone (NGO or activist) frames 'activism' as individual action. Say goodbye to that great feminist notion that 'the personal is political.' This is meant to mean that what we experience and get to 'choose' in our everyday lives is shaped and pre-constrained by societal structures and the political system we live under. What seems to be a personal choice is deeply politically influenced. Instead, everything is back on the individual (and even that saying has been turned on its head). For example, people choose one oil company over another to try and feel less guilty! There is no such thing as a good oil company. Boycotting your $40 a week to go elsewhere really isn't going to change anything. What does a 'campaign' like *Boycott Shell* or *Be The Change* say to people? That you are individually responsible and thus it is your fault if nothing changes (i.e. it's not about corporates / state / capitalism / imperialism). It's you, you bad person, you didn't recycle your number 2 plastics.

NGOs also perpetuate a model of single issue politics. Armstrong and Prashad (2005) state that "NGOization" means "each of our groups carves out areas of expertise or special interest, gets intensely informed about the area, and then uses this market specialisation to attract members and funds. Organisations that 'do too much' bewilder the landscape."[22]

How many times have you heard it lambasted that climate change is the single most important issue facing the globe (or humanity) today? What about colonisation and capitalism? What about the very economic and political structures that got us to this place? What about the fact that right now there are already people without freshwater (which we are so worried about is coming for 'us')? Furthermore, the 'white progressive economic nationalist frame'[23] is prominent. NGOs seem determined to seperate 'their' issues from the global context or an analysis of state and capital.

I am most certainly writing this in my own capacity but I will just traverse a few of my experiences of Save Happy Valley. This is an activist entity that I wouldn't define as an NGO (although I did find the definition in a recent *Coal News* humorous: "SHV

21 http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/globatmos/gagccukem.htm

22 p. 184, cited in Choudry, 2007, p. 102

23 Choudry, 2007, p. 101. Choudry notes that 'the dominant frame for most "anti-globalisation" campaigns typically identifies transnational corporations, powerful governments like the US and domestic business and political elites as engines of neoliberalism, but essentially proposes a program of reforms and strengthening of social democatic governance as a solution. This frame advocates nostalgia for a Keynesian welfare state, retooling the national government, re-regulation of the economy, tighter controls on foreign investors, more social spending and more public consulatation, participation, and transparency around policy-making. Underpinning this are assumptions about supposedly universal and shared "Canadian" or "Kiwi" values that must be reclaimed to (re)build a fairer society' (p. 100 – 101). It is this that he terms the white progressive economic nationalist position. He continues: 'largely missing from this dominant frame is any genuine acknowledgement of the colonial underpinnings of Canadian [or the New Zealand] state and society, the ongoing denial of Indigenous Peoples' rights to self-determination, and the highly racialised construction of Canadian [or New Zealand] citizenship and state' (p. 101).

is rather unusual as an environmental NGO in that most of its members don't come from a background in the green movement (eg, members of F&B, local conservation groups, Green Party, etc).")[24] However, during the time I was actively involved we did intersect heavily with these NGOs, and spent a large amount of time a long way down a self-policing / self-moderating path (e.g. concerns about doing train blockades, not critiquing Department of Conservation for the first two years of our campaign so as not to upset more long-term liberal green activists, watering down beyond recognition a declaration that Happy Valley was an autonomous zone). We frequently 'toned down' our politics in ways that surprised many of us upon reflection (e.g. meeting the Green Party on Parliament steps dressed as a kiwi, then going inside for discussions with the the Conservation Minister). We readily used the system's tools, such as the corporate media and the Court system, including taking a court case against corporate spies, printing 16000 postcards to MPs, only meeting with miners and West Coast locals occassionally, criticising Solid Energy's activities as 'illegal,' encouraging people to write submissions, talking about and largely treating Non Violent Direct Action as a last resort, reducing plans to nothing more than media stunts. This was despite making several express commitments to only using such tools where they aligned with our (at times fairly clear) strategy. We organised strategy talks run by self-purported 'experienced activists' who told us to focus on kiwi and media rather than politicisation. We allowed significant role centralisation (with myself a major culprit).

I've done the whole "We are working so hard here, how dare you criticise xyz," and I have excelled at the 'pragmatic decision making' where you compromise your politics because 'it just has to be done,' the media's calling, this is a way of talking that 'people will understand.' But I would say now, at least we can critique what we do!

I have struggled writing this; first because even our active critiquing is so often limited inside the NPIC / NGOism / 'activist' framework. For example, in Save Happy Valley, we would only (if at all) critique an action based on its effectiveness as activism – rather than ever looking at was Save Happy Valley effective? Are single issue environmental campaigns effective? If we are deciding to fight them then what work can we do that is at least aligned with our broader political understandings? More often than not, though, our decision making was based on "Will this annoy X?" or "Will this please Y?" (The public, local greenies, an MP, other members of Save Happy Valley, Solid Energy). Writing this piece, I find it hard to critique 'ourselves,' because we have drawn us up a subculture, been to a dozen hui where we've talked of allies, seperated ourselves from the rest of the world and so we are afraid of reprisal from each other lest we be left out in the rain.

24 Lusk, P, long-time West Coast environmental activist (Buller Conservation Group, West Coast Forest and Bird, Riverwatch, formerly Save Happy Valley Coalition, etc.). Coal News 26, email received 10/04/08.

> A part of the bourgeoisie is desirous of redressing social grievances, in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society.... To this section belong the economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organizers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind. **(Marx and Engels)**[25]

NGOism, and NGOist activism, are problematic not only because it is ineffective, but because it actively stops any real work for change. A challenge for us could be how to engage in (our) communities and collectively figure out how to change the real parameters. And of course, a simple step would be that we could start by organising outside of NGOs! For example, if you share this critique,[26] and you are going to continue working for an NGO, I'd encourage you to just treat it as a job. Do your real work elsewhere. Don't use up your own time trying to defend them. The dominant Judaeo-Christian heritage means we are frequently driven to 'do something,' yet often rushing off to the next activism campaign is simply colluding with (and thus protecting) capitalism. If we decide we want to do things differently (and so little is going on that operates outside of NGOist activism that we could at least *try* organising differently) a starting point may be to reflect on our practice and use that to inform our theory, which in turn informs our practice, which informs our theory...

> 'Empowerment of people should be a primary goal for anarchists.'[27] **(Sam Buchanan)** Ⓐ

25 Marx, K., Engels, F., Stedman, G. & Moore, S. 2002. *The Communist Manifesto (1848)*. Penguin Classics. p. 252.

26 And I realise many do not; for example in a recent *Auckland Anarchist* there was an article that even went so far as to claim membership recruitment for Greenpeace could point 'in the direction of workers power' and thus count as creating Anarchy. *I do my bit to create Anarchy one phone call at a time.* Retrieved 14/04/08 http://anarchism.net.nz/node/39

27 Sam Buchanan. 1999. *Anarchy: The Transmogrification of Everyday Life.* CEC, Wellington. p. 20

Suggested Readings

'The Big Charity Bonanza,' D. Ransom. New Internationalist (Issue 383, 2005).
Big international non-governmental organizations (bingos) are not just a mouthful – they're a handful, growing into clumsy but powerful giants. David Ransom is not sure they're a good idea.

Available online at http://newint.org/features/2005/10/01/keynote/

Can this really save the planet? By George Marshall
We are constantly told to switch the TV off standby, recycle our plastic bags and boil less water – but does focusing on the small, easy steps distract us from the bigger picture?

Available online from http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2007/sep/13/ethicalliving.climatechange

Transnational Activist Coalition Politics and the De/Colonisation of Pedagogies of Mobilisation: Learning from Anti-neoliberal Indigenous Movement Articulations. By Aziz Choudry
Search for it online: try http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-1426394931.html

Today's Empire is Tomorrow's... dust! By Emily.
Includes a section on 'Strategising for a revolution.' Are we really free now? #2. April 2007. Available from the Freedom Shop, 204 B Left Bank, Poneke/Wellington.

The Carbon Neutral Myth: Offset Inudlgences for your Climate Sins. Carbon Trade Watch.

Carbon offsets are the modern day indulgences, sold to an increasingly carbon conscious public to absolve their climate sins. Scratch the surface, however, and a disturbing picture emerges, where creative accountancy and elaborate shell games cover up the impossibility of verifying genuine climate change benefits, and where communities in the South often have little choice as offset projects are inflicted on them.

This report argues that offsets place disproportionate emphasis on individual lifestyles and carbon footprints, distracting attention from the wider, systemic changes and collective political action that needs to be taken to tackle climate change. Promoting more effective and empowering approaches involves moving away from the marketing gimmicks, celebrity endorsements, technological quick fixes, and the North/South exploitation that the carbon offsets industry embodies.

Available online at http://www.carbontradewatch.org/pubs/carbon_neutral_myth.pdf

CO2nned. New Internationalist (Issue No. 391, July 2006).

Carbon offsets not only don't solve climate change, they can even worsen it by delaying the inevitable need to end the fossil-fuel frenzy we're all a part of. Harsh words? Maybe. But the reality of climate change will be even harsher if we don't take real action now. Don't be CO2nned by promises of being carbon 'neutral.'

Available online at
http://www.newint.org/issues/2006/07/01/

The Revolution Will Not Be Funded.
Edited by INCITE! Women of Colour Against Violence

Another 'radical'-liberal publication. The 'non-profit industrial complex' (NPIC) is defined as "the set of symbiotic relationships that link together political and financial technologies of state and owning-class proctorship and surveillance over public political intercourse, including and especially emergent progressive and leftist social movements" (pp. 21-22). The NPIC grew out of the individual 'do-gooders' of the 1800s, and the organisations they formed late that century. Since the radical social movements of the 1960s, the NPIC has grown to 'take a role in shaping this organising so that social protest would not challenge the capitialist status quo' (p. 7). It is 'the natural corollary to the prison industrial complex' (PIC) because 'while the PIC overtly represses dissent the NPIC manages and controls dissent by incorporating it into the state apparatus' (p. 8).

Available for order from
http://www.southendpress.org/2006/items/87662

When Corporations Want to Cuddle: The Corporate PR Machine. By Bob Burton.

A chapter from Geoff Evans, James Goodman and Nina Lansbury (editors), *Moving Mountains: communities confront mining and globalisation,* Contemporary Oxford Press/Mineral Policy Institute (MPI), Sydney 2001. Reviews the PR strategy of seeking to encourage non-government organisations to collaborate with companies and government agencies embroiled in controversy. Focuses on the activities of the environmental group WWF and its national affiliates especially in Australia and New Zealand.

Available online at www.prwatch.org/documents/cuddlingcorporates.pdf

On 1 January, Tūhoe welcomed people from around Aotearoa to celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the occupation at Lake Waikaremoana. The celebration began with a powhiri at Waimako Marae and then moved down to the original lakeside site of the occupation, adjacent to the motor camp.

– Val

Lake Waikaremoana:



Back in Tūhoe Hands



The celebration was attended by members of the Tūhoe nation from around the rohe and by anarchists and members of Conscious Collaborations, an indigenous collective striving for a world that acknowledges Papatūānuku (Earthmother) by building synergies between indigenous, activist, and creative communities.

The gathering was held in the aftermath of the police raids into Tūhoe country on 15th October 2007 resulting in the arrest of Tame Iti, spokesperson for Te Mana Motuhake ō Tūhoe and 16 others. When the gathering was organised in mid-2007, it was certainly about commemorating this past struggle. However, the October raids had a profound effect on the gathering, and subsequent police disclosure of evidence reveals that one of the motivations for 'Operation Eight' was very clearly about who owns this lake and the water in it.

Ten years ago, there were two different groups that had longstanding issues with the management of the lake: Ngā Tamariki o te Kohu (the children of the mist) and Ruapani, led by Waipatu Winitana. Their aims were complementary, but not identical. Ngā Tamariki o Kohu was concerned about the proximity of an oxidation pond to the lake and the overflow hose, with its potential to leak; the decline of kiwi habitat and population in the areas around the lake; the impact of possums on native fauna; the impact of deer and pigs on forest regeneration; and finally, the impact of tourists on the ecosystem of the Lake.

On the other hand, Ruapani's primary issue concerned the Department of Conservation's (DoC) management of the lakebed. By a Deed of Lease signed on the

21st day of August 1971, nine leading Kaumātua: Sir Turi Carroll, John Rangihau, Wiremu Mātāmua, Turi Tipoki, Te Okanga Huata, Canon Rimu Hamiora Rangīhu, Tikitu Tepōno, William Waiwai, Kahu Tihi together with (now) Mr Justice Gallen signed a lease to the Crown of 5,210 hectares (12,875 acres) comprising the bed of Lake Waikaremoana, the islands in that lake but excluding Patekaha Island and including the present foreshore above the 2020 foot contour in terms of Kaitawa Datum. The lease provided:

- for an initial term of 50 years from 1st July 1967 with a perpetual right of renewal;
- rental at the rate of $5.50 per centum per annum on the rental value to be fixed by ten yearly valuation and, if necessary, arbitration;
- the lessee is to administer control and maintain the leased land in accordance with the provisions of the (now) National Parks Act 1980; and
- access from continuous Māori Reserves to the lake's waters was reserved at all times as was a right of access from the Māori Reserves to the Wairoa Rotorua Road at a point to be mutually agreed between the parties.[1]

Under the terms of the lakebed lease, the Department was responsible for maintaining the lakebed in a pristine condition. Despite this clause, there were significant problems with giardia and invasive weeds in the lake.

After considerable discussion, members of Ngā Tamariki o te Kohu decided that an occupation was the most effective way of getting these issues addressed. Many within Ngā Tamariki o te Kohu felt that the Department of Conservation was not hearing their concerns. On the 31st of December 1997, approximately 20 people entered the site and prepared to occupy.

Some kaumātua had concerns about the way in which the decision to undertake the occupation was taken, e.g. that not all kaumātua had been advised that it was going to happen; ultimately, they were supportive of the aims of the action and keen to have the issues addressed. One elder, John Tahuri of Maungapōhatu came from his hospital bed to support the occupation and subsequently left his tokotoko (talking stick) with the occupation as a sign of his support.

There were initial confrontations with police when they attempted to remove people from the site. Many of the younger members who provided security at the entrance to the occupation site simply told the police to bugger off as Tūhoe were on their own land.

During the course of the occupation, the then Minister of Māori Affairs, Tau Henare invited Tame Iti, who was the spokesperson for Ngā Tamariki o te Kohu to Parliament in order that the issues of concern could be addressed.

Tame Iti travelled to Wellington in order to meet with Henare. He was, however, initially rebuffed when he arrived and was not given permission to enter the minister's office. Henare's actions were shameful and eventually Tame was successful in getting into see him. The minister agreed to hold a ministerial enquiry into the issues raised if the

group agreed to vacate the lakeshore occupation.

After 67 days, the group decamped from the occupation site. The ministerial enquiry was held at Waimako Marae. It was, as can be expected from any such bureaucratic exercise, a total whitewash. "Nothing that we heard caused us to come to the view that the Department of Conservation was failing in its obligations to the two Trust Boards, as lessor, in its role as lessee in the management of the land as if it were a National Park."[2]

Nevertheless, the occupation was considered a success. In spite of the total denial of the validity of the issues raised, the occupation achieved some significant changes to the Department of Conservation's management of the Lake including:

- an improvement of the relationship between tangata whenua and the Department of Conservation insofar as the Department viewed its responsibilities to Tūhoe more seriously
- the oxidation pond was decommissioned and as of 2007 a new one is being constructed with the input of local iwi
- management of kiwi habitat programme on Tapuna Reserve is completely controlled by local iwi

More significantly than the immediate results of the occupation was a strengthening of the iwi's desire for a return of control over the Lake. Naturally, Lake Waikaremoana forms a part of the Tūhoe claim under the Treaty of Waitangi settlement process. The occupation began a conversation about the need to have a permanent presence on the Lake again.

The last permanent settlement of Tūhoe on the Lake was likely at Tapuna Reserve in about 1940. The scorched earth policy where British soldiers invaded Tūhoe territory in the bitter cold of winter, burning crops, pillaging, murdering and leaving the people to starve in the 1860s was and is very much alive in the minds of Tūhoe people. Many members of the local iwi had left the Lake area fearing further Pākehā retribution. Te Ara, the Online Encylopedia of New Zealand, notes:

> Old enemies of Tūhoe fought on the side of the government; they carried out most of the raids into Te Urewera during a prolonged and destructive search between 1869 and 1872. In a policy aimed at turning the tribe away from Te Kooti, a scorched earth campaign was unleashed against Tūhoe; people were imprisoned and killed, their cultivations and homes destroyed, and stock killed or run off. Through starvation, deprivation and atrocities at the hands of the government's Māori forces, Tūhoe submitted to the Crown.[3]

Given this experience and the subsequent invasion of Maungapōhatu by armed constabulary in

1916, it is hardly surprising that many Tūhoe people have been wary of reestablishing a presence on the Lake.

The people at the occupation and at this 10-year celebration have committed themselves to the construction of a marae at the Lake. Citing Te Arawa, Ngā Puhi, and Tūwharetoa as examples, James Waiwai a member of the original occupation noted that most other iwi have a presence at their respective lakes. It is a natural place for the tangata whenua to be as kaitiaki (guardians) of the lake and the surrounding land. The exact location of the marae will need to be the subject of consultation with people around the Lake, but the celebration gave new impetus to the desire to get on with its construction.

The other result of the occupation was a cementing of the desire for a full return of the Lake to Tūhoe control. Lake Waikaremoana is Māori freehold hand and is acknowledged as such by the 1971 Lake Waikaremoana Act. It is for the moment largely under the control of the Crown. The Department of Conservation is aware of the desires of Tūhoe for return of control of the Lake.

The celebration of the occupation at New Year's 2008 was initiated by Tame Iti in mid-2007. He and other members of Ngā Tamariki o te Kohu wanted not only to commemorate the struggle for Tūhoe control of the Lake, but wanted to share the history and expand the support for the independence of the Tūhoe people.

Initially, the celebration was received with support from the local Department of Conservation. However, following the nation-wide police raids on 15 October, the arrests of Tame Iti and other Tūhoe activists along with the allegations of terrorism, there was a decided cooling of support from DoC.

After a rousing call to action by Tame Iti in which he invited 'freedom fighters and comrades' to the celebration, the local organising group was told to shut it down. They took a decision that if the police or anyone else tried to intervene that they would again occupy the site.

Fortunately, the organising crew prevailed and managed to extract the provision of toilets, a generator, petrol and wood for a wharekai (kitchen) from the local district council for the celebration. Local farmers also contributed food for the celebration. Police did surveil the celebration from the motor camp next door, but were not seen otherwise.

Over the four days of the celebration, the discussion about anarchist support for Tūhoe began. This relationship, born largely as a result of the police raids, will take much more talk and action to manifest into genuine trust and solidarity. There are many anarchists who want that to happen. There is a need for much discussion in the anarchist community of Aotearoa about what such support and solidarity actually means.

The achievement of tino rangatiratanga (translated here as 'sovereignty') for Tūhoe will happen and with it, will be the return of the Lake to their guardianship, from their ancestors and for their children. Ⓐ

Endnotes

The text of this article is based on an interview with James Waiwai (Ngati Hinekura, Te Whanau Pani of Tuhoe) on 4 January 2008 at Lake Waikaremoana.

1 Ministry of Maori Affairs: Te Puni Kokiri. 1998. *Joint Ministerial Inquiry Lake Waikaremoana: Report to Minister of Maori Affairs, Hon Tau Henare, Minister of Conservation, Hon Dr Nick Smith.* (http://www.tpk.govt.nz/publications/docs/lakewaikare.html accessed 7 January 2008)

2 ibid

3 'Resistance: 1866 to 1872.' *Te Ara: the on-line encyclopedia of New Zealand.* (http://www.google.com/gwt/n?u=http://www.teara.govt.nz/NewZealanders/MaoriNewZealanders/NgaiTuhoe/5/en accessed 7 January 2008)

How I Became a Feminist

– Nausea Nissenbaum

I must have been three and
We were at kindy I
Remember standing by the gate which seemed so tall then
Its long teeth sunk into the dirt

I was standing with the little boy, who was my boyfriend
I was three years old which is old enough
To know about that sort of thing.

We were waiting for the new girl
And when she arrived he started punching me like
Hard out punching I was
So shocked I didn't even think
To punch him back I
Just burst into tears.

The kindy teacher comforted me
There there she said
That's just what boys do
When they're trying to impress a girl.
He's just showing off his strength,
Trying to impress a girl

No point telling him off coz
That's just what boys do.
And I'm three years old already that's
Old enough to
Know about
These things.

And that is how I became
A feminist, well, it took
A few years more but I
Like to think
The seeds
Were planted
Then.


For Revolutionary Struggle
Not Activism
– Asher

"We need more people!"

"If only there were more anarchists..."

These phrases and others like them are all too common amongst our anarchist communities across Aotearoa (and no doubt the rest of the world). But in themselves, they betray a fatal mistake in our goals, in how we see our role in moving towards a revolutionary situation.

An anarchist revolution will not come if we simply seek to convert more people to anarchism. Rather, more people adopting anarchist theory will be a by-product of successful anarchist organising and solidarity. There are a few issues we need to examine in order to best understand the role of anarchists in capitalist society.

Who will make a revolution?

An anarchist revolution cannot be made by a vanguard, by an elite group of activists, politicos or anarchists. A truly libertarian revolution, which all anarchists seek, can only be made by the great mass of the working class, in a broad sense of the term. This revolution will not magically appear the day we manage to get 51% of the population to call themselves anarchists, but rather by constantly seeking to expand upon the consciousness and militancy of the working class.

Genuine revolution will not be created by a specialist group of "professional revolutionaries." While many anarchists have a sound critique of groups such as Greenpeace, SAFE or Amnesty International in that they posit themselves as the experts on activism, who the majority of people can pay to do political work, anarchists frequently fail to see that much of what they are doing is exactly the same, except they're silly enough to do it for free! A large chunk of activism done by anarchists in Aotearoa in the last few years has been of this bent – we call the marches, we show up (perhaps with a few others, but rarely from outside of the wider activist circles), we hand out leaflets to bemused onlookers (who either ignore us or laugh at us, but certainly wouldn't join in), then we go home. Ongoing organising be damned, we're making a stand!

What are we doing?

Almost all anarchist activity in Aotearoa falls into two broad categories – activism (covering protests, single-issue groups etc.) and propaganda (infoshops and publishing). It is activism that I will deal with here.

Activism deals primarily with issues far removed from the everyday lives of most people in Aotearoa – NZ troop involvement in overseas invasions, coal mines on the West Coast, a meeting of rich countries on the other side of the planet. In focusing on this type of issue, we ensure that we remain invisible to the vast majority of the working class, and out of touch with the very forces that can create the revolutionary situation we so desire.

In activism, we separate ourselves from the majority of the populace – protesting, marching, direct action etc. are activities undertaken by "activists," a specialist cadre of experts on social change.

Of course, there is no continuity in our activism, no real ongoing organising. Just jumping from protest to protest, deluding ourselves that we are having any effect whatsoever. Even our ongoing campaigns (for instance anti-war, or Save Happy Valley) are generally little more than semi-regular protests, with the odd press release in between. Almost nowhere is there any long term, strategic, grassroots organising taking place. Almost nowhere do we seem to acknowledge that things do take time to come to fruition. Instead, we bang our heads against a brick wall for a while, then move round the corner to the wall made of concrete, deceiving ourselves into thinking that we're making progress.

Our activities are primarily oriented to other radicals, both in Aotearoa and overseas. We go to protests with each other, then head to a computer and post reports and photos on Indymedia, so our activist friends around the country can see what we did. If the demo was especially interesting, we might even all go together to a flat so we can see ourselves on the evening news! We are an insular collection of people, and even when we have the appearance of interacting with the public (for instance, on a march), we still ensure that we are separate from them, the "normals." We don't engage in conversation, just hand them a flier then move on, and after a while retreat back to the other radicals, safe behind a line of banners.

Against a subcultural orientation

The anarchist community in Aotearoa is thoroughly mired in subcultural politics. The punk and hippy subcultures between them supply the bulk of self-identified anarchists, with most of the remainder coming through the "alternative" liberal (ie. – Green Party, fair trade, organics etc) community. That's not to say that none of those people are working class, but rather that they are getting involved because of their subcultural identity.

There is a huge difference between a working class movement that is oriented to working class struggles and therefore attracts working class people, and a subcultural community that is oriented to specific subcultures and therefore attracts people from

those subcultures. One of the above options could lead to a revolutionary situation. The other keeps us in our self-built ghetto.

For struggles of everyday life

If we are seeking to expand the consciousness and militancy of the working class, we need to stop focusing on battles which for most people appear to have little relevance, and are totally unwinnable for us few anarchists in Aotearoa, anyway. We need to move away from the WTO and towards the workplace, away from the coal-mine and towards the community, away from the spectacular summit demo and towards the struggles of everyday life.

We need to stand in solidarity with workplace struggles that are taking place – standing on the picket lines and engaging with the workers taking part. We also need to be agitating with our workmates in our own workplaces. There are always grievances, it is our task to do all we can to promote collective action to fight for better wages and conditions, of course without any illusions that this will ever be enough in and of itself.

We need to be engaging with our own communities, whether they be geographical, ethnic or otherwise. In our geographical communities, we need to agitate with those around us and build a sense of purposeful connection now, so that when attacks come, we already have a base from which to struggle. When city councils attempt to impose extra charges (such as bin taxes or water metering), destroy community facilities such as libraries or swimming pools, or raise rents on council flats, we need to stand with our communities in opposition and fight.

This type of organising around the struggles of everyday life isn't easy, it isn't quick, and it isn't sexy, but it is vital if we are to build a revolutionary movement against capital and state. The more we struggle, the more we build our bases in our workplaces and communities, the better chance we have of winning, and the broader and more interlinked our struggles will become.

"I am an anarchist not because I believe Anarchism is the final goal, but because I believe there is no such thing as a final goal. Freedom will lead us to continually wider and expanding understanding and to new social forms of life."
– Rudolf Rocker, a German anarcho-syndicalist

For the broadening and intensification of struggle

It is the task of anarchists to always be broadening the terms of any given struggle, and to fight against its recuperation. In workplace struggles, we should be wary of union attempts to sell out workers. In community struggles, we should be wary of NGOs and community groups who may seek a swift resolution without the meeting of all demands.

We must always seek to bring to light the systemic roots of what we are fighting against, and to link our struggles with others happening within our communities and around the world.

We must also realise that the odds are stacked against us, and, for a long time, we will likely lose more than we win. This doesn't mean that we should stop fighting, or retreat into our activist ghettos. For if we fight, we have a chance at creating a better society, but in giving up or retreating, we lose any chance we ever had. Ⓐ

Further Reading

The Myth Of Passivity by Toby Boraman

The Myth Of Passivity documents the class struggles against the neoliberal policies of the 1980's, such as the Employment Contracts Act, "Ruthinasia," and "Rogernomics." It takes a critical look at the way major Unions opposed these policies as well as looking at resistance from groups such as Maori, the Unemployed and Anarchists.

Available online at http://libcom.org/library/myth-passivity-class-struggles-neoliberalism-aotearoa-toby-boraman or order from http://katipo.net.nz/product_info.php/products_id/194

The Lessons Of The Bin Tax Struggle – Interview with Dermot Sreenan, Workers Solidarity Movement

The opening years of the century saw a mass community based struggle against the shifting of taxation further onto the working class in Dublin, Ireland. Thousands of households were paid up members of the campaign and tens of thousands refused to pay this new tax over a period of years despite prosecutions, media hysteria and the jailing of over 20 activists.

Available online at http://libcom.org/library/the-lessons-of-the-bin-tax-struggle

Beyond Resistance: A Revolutionary Manifesto by the Anarchist Federation (UK)

Beyond Resistance is the Anarchist Federation's analysis of the capitalist world in crisis, suggestions about what the alternative anarchist communist society could be like, and evaluation of social and organisational forces which play a part in the revolutionary process.

Available for order from http://katipo.net.nz/product_info.php/products_id/357

Poll Tax Rebellion by Danny Burns

The gripping inside story of the biggest mass movement in British history, which at its peak involved over 17 million people. Using a combination of photos, text, and graphics, and drawing from the voices of activists and non-payers, it describes the everyday organization of local anti-poll tax groups and chronicles the demonstrations and riots leading up to the battle of Trafalgar. It shows how the courts were blocked, the bailiffs resisted, and the Poll Tax destroyed.

Available for order from http://akpress.com/1996/items/polltaxrebellion and see a review at http://libcom.org/library/poll-tax-rebellion-danny-burns-reviewed-wildcat-uk-1993

Also see the history, library and organise sections at http://www.libcom.org

Why is it so Hard to Support Survivors?

– Kim

This article offers my thoughts on why it's hard for many of us to get our heads around the idea of being "survivor" focused. The justice system puts more energy into people who break the law than people who are hurt. We might know the justice system is fucked, but our thinking can still be influenced by it. This means that we drift towards thinking about people who have hurt others, more than we support those they've hurt.



When this is combined with empathy and compassion, our efforts to take on abuse in our scenes can end up actually hurting the person who was abused more than if we'd stayed out of it. We need to remind ourselves: whenever there is a conflict between the wants or needs of the two people, our first priority is with the person who was hurt.

What we learn from our justice system

The relationship between our "justice" system and the religious system that it's come out of, is obvious in their focus on people who have done something we think is wrong, the sinner and their sin, the perpetrator and their crime. From the moment someone says they've been hurt, our justice system is completely focused on the person who hurt them – finding out who it was, what they did, was it illegal, and what to do with that person. Even a liberal response generally remains directed at an offender – looking at the factors leading to a person offending, trying to understand, reform and rehabilitate them, identifying issues that contributed, poverty, bad role models, lack of education and opportunity, etc.

As much as our justice system developed out of our culture, our culture is affected by the justice system. The way we think about problems often reflects the way the justice system works. Whatever we think of it, the law provides a clear set of rules and expectations that we can point to instead of having to think about our own morality: as long as you can't prove that my behaviour is illegal, then I am a perfectly good person. The legal system provides a way of dealing with conflict. We don't have to consider the most reasonable, appropriate or potentially successful response to someone hurting us or someone we care about; instead we can call in the law and it's out of our hands. Whether or not we would ever do this, that way of thinking is such a part of the pakeha culture most of us grew up in, that we often seem to mimic it. So much so that when one of our friends is hurt by someone, our question quickly becomes how should we respond to the person who hurt them.

What's missing is a deeper response for the person who was hurt. The justice system only includes them as much as they can help with the process of dealing with the person who hurt them. I believe that the first step of a radical response to abuse is to focus on the person who has been hurt. I know this isn't a new idea, but I think it needs to be constantly restated until there is a deeper understanding, or we come up with a better idea. It needs to be constantly restated because it feels so alien to think first of the person who was abused – we've been socialised or brain-washed to think of them as less relevant than the person who hurt them. If we hadn't been indoctrinated by our punitive culture that treats them as irrelevant when dealing with abusive behaviour, I think we'd know that the most appropriate and rational response would be to focus on them.

How we make it worse

There are many ways we can make people feel worse when they talk to us about being abused. We can tell them that it isn't such a big deal, we can do nothing about it and act like it isn't important, we can blame them for not doing something about it sooner, we can take over and tell them what needs to happen. All these responses are common to anarchist scenes and the wider community. I want to talk about the ways that anarchists, in particular, can make things worse.

As anarchists, most of us are opposed to punishment for its own sake, and we have ideals about supporting each other through our shit, our learning, and unlearning. We have ideals of compassion and empathy, and try to remember that we aren't perfect. When we hear about abuse, our first thought may be for our friend who was hurt, but most of us are also quick to empathise with the person who hurt our friend. Something along the lines of "I know I've fucked up heaps, I know what that feels like, that person must feel like shit too, they need support." Which is true, and that person may be a friend of ours as well. However, we don't have endless resources and energy, and our circles of support are usually small. Even if we're supporting people to stop abusing, we need to be careful that we don't end up putting so much energy and time into them, that we don't have enough for the person they hurt. If we do this, the person who was hurt may feel like their abuser is being rewarded with attention and resources to heal, while they have to heal and deal with shit on their own. I've participated in this and seen it happen over and again. It creates a system that is even harder on survivors than the justice system.

One reason we end up neglecting the needs of people who have been abused is that we allow ourselves to be rushed. Our compassion for our friend who hurt someone means we want to try to fix things quickly. We start thinking of it as a problem that needs to be solved, we forget about the pain of the person they hurt. We forget to honour and respect their experiences of abuse and what they need to heal. Their pain has become abstract. When this happens, I think we will only make things worse.

When we are first struggling to stay focused on the needs of the person who

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has been hurt, sometimes we will unintentionally end up asking them for "solutions." When we do this, it has nothing to do with supporting the person: we are asking them to make it easier for us, for our lives to go back to normal. We may become frustrated with them because they don't have solutions, or they don't know what they need, or what they need seems to keep changing. There probably aren't any simple solutions, and it isn't the responsibility of the person who experienced the abuse to come up with them. At some point, what they need will become clear to them; rushing them isn't going to help them get there. If we're feeling frustrated at them, then we're thinking about things wrong, and we will make things worse for them.

How we make things better

I believe that the person who was hurt should always be given priority. What this means is that whenever there is a conflict between the wants or needs of the two people, the appropriate response is always to try to do what the person who was hurt wants. For example, if the person who was abused feels like they can't go somewhere in case they see the person that hurt them, then we can try to make sure that person isn't there. This doesn't mean we should ignore the needs of the person responsible for the abuse. I believe they should be offered support to heal and change their behaviour. It doesn't mean ostracising or judging them; it has nothing to do with punishment, restorative justice, rehabilitation, or anything focused on that person, nor does it mean those things can't happen. It just means that whatever else we do, first we try to give the survivor all the support they want.

When they don't know what they want, we might need to take responsibility for some decisions. For example, the person who was hurt might seem to go back and forth on whether they can see the person who hurt them. Rather than making them come up with a single solution to this "problem," or asking them every time they might both be somewhere, we could say that the person who hurt them is

only welcome when invited by the person they hurt. That gives power to the person who was hurt, without putting pressure on them.

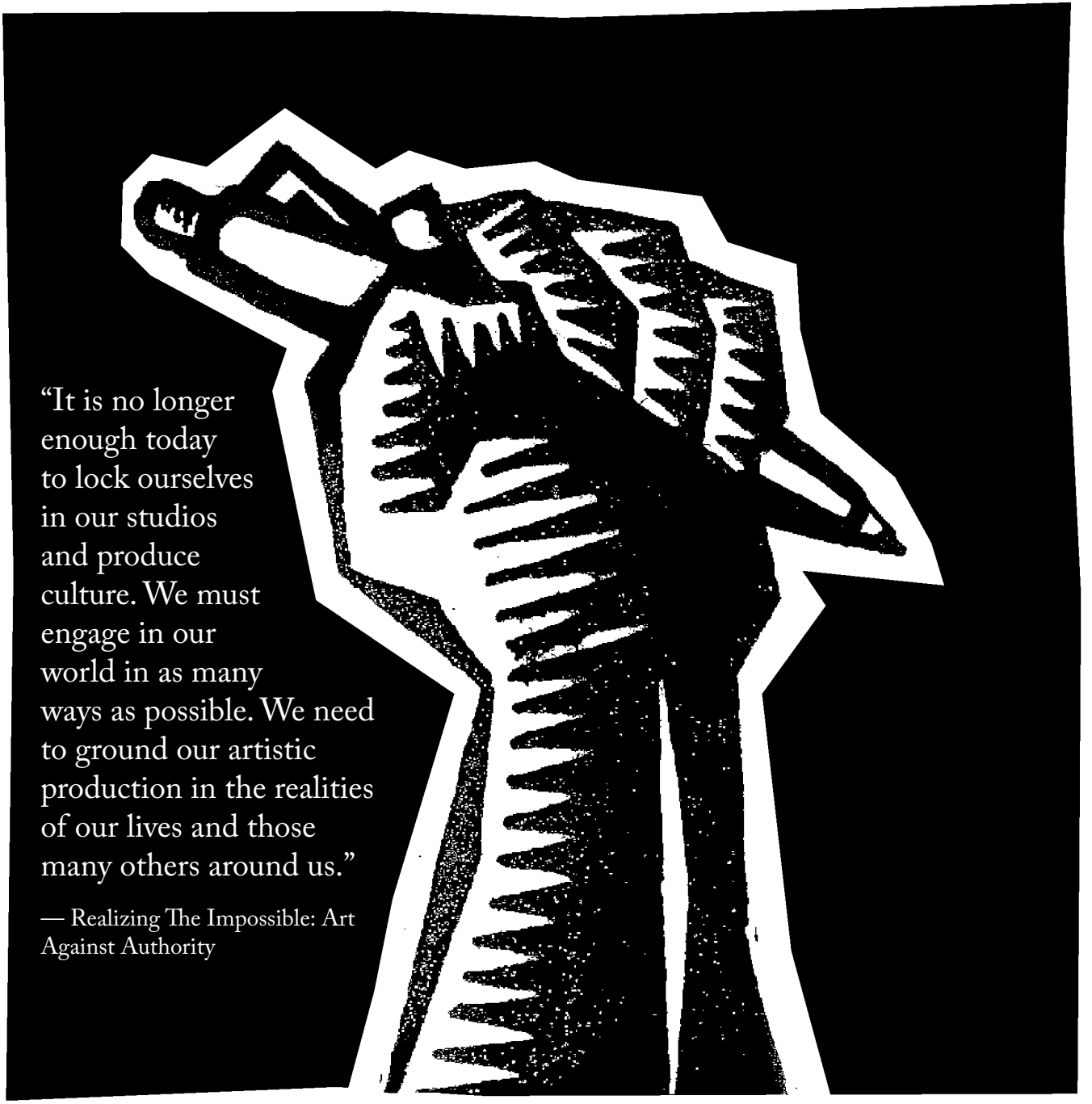
We need to do all we can to let that person control their healing process. That means not taking over, or telling them what they need to do, or making it about us in any way. It means not pressuring them to let us do what we want regardless of what they want: eg. if they don't want us to confront the person who abused them about their behaviour, then we need to respect that as much as we can, while making sure other people are safe.

The pain probably isn't going to go away quickly for the person who was hurt. We need to honour that pain, and let things take as long as they take, instead of trying to fix things as quickly as possible.

Even thinking about abuse is really hard for lots of us, trying to work out how to respond to it is fucking stressful. Most of us don't have a lot of experience with dealing with abuse in our own communities. We need to take our time, focus on supporting the person who was hurt as much as they need, try not to make things worse for them, and try to put them first whenever there is conflict between them and the person who hurt them. We need to remember how real this is. Someone was hurt. They are hurting, and it isn't their fault. 

Notes

1. I don't offer a model for dealing with abuse in relationships, or abuse we hear about in our scene, or a model for survivor support.
2. I'm no expert, these are just my thoughts, based largely on my struggles to get my head around this, and ways I've screwed up. If you think I've got it wrong, or what I've written is shit or dangerous, please talk to me about it, and maybe write something for Imminent Rebellion. We all want to get better at dealing with abuse.
3. It's really hard to write about abuse without using loaded language or making sentences complicated and unintelligible. I've tried to use terms that readers can understand and that remind readers of what I'm talking about. "Survivor" feels too abstract when I'm talking about someone who was hurt. "Abuser" can feel damning and judgmental when I mean someone who has hurt someone else. Hopefully the compromises I made trying to write this mean it's still readable.



"It is no longer enough today to lock ourselves in our studios and produce culture. We must engage in our world in as many ways as possible. We need to ground our artistic production in the realities of our lives and those many others around us."

— Realizing The Impossible: Art Against Authority

Towards an An4rcho-DESIGN Practice

– Jared Davidson

Graphic design has predominately been, and still is, the tool which beautifies, communicates and commodifies a set of ideas, ideals or products within various tenets of our social and economic relations. Unfortunately, it is fair to say that this creative tool is overwhelmingly used in an economic/commercial sense — consciously or unconsciously using its talents to exploit — to raise profit margins and material wealth for the benefit of a select clientele.

While graphic design lends its talents outside of the commercial realm in the form of an informative and communicative visual language, and in academic or self-authorship, research-based practices — the primary role of graphic design as a medium is that of the visual instrument of the powerful; the seller of sales, the convincer of consumers — employed by the corporate body or state-sanctioned by capitalist / socialist totalitarian governments in order to perfect and reinforce their hegemonic positions. And while design academia can wax poetic about the virtues of graphic design and its specialised visual language — conveniently sidestepping more tangible issues — the design industry practitioner, whether one chooses to acknowledge his/her role or not, must realise that their labour is nothing more than the harbinger of consumerism, used in the

service of monolithic capitalism and all of its ails. Without graphic design those who sustain these ills of society have no face, no visual identity, no point of reference, and most importantly, no effect.

While recognising in the libertarian tradition that no individual designer, group, government or institution has the right to define the role in which graphic design should play,[1] it is important to explore and encourage alternative design practices in an attempt to counter the exploitative position it has consciously stepped into. Analysis of the capacity inherent in design/designers practices to alleviate current ideologies, and to aid in more alternative modes of social organisation is needed, and has begun in limited pockets of the design world.[2] Design then, must explore the peripheral space outside of advertising; totally devoid of any commercial use — or more specifically, for the movement towards a more humane and libertarian society, that is to say, a more autonomous existence based on self-management, mutual aid, solidarity and direct participation in one's affairs. As the potential producer, educator, organiser and visual face of social change, graphic design could weld its creative future with more important and pressing concerns than market shares, profit margins and consumption rates.

"One cannot, in the nature of things, expect a little tree that has turned into a club to put forth leaves"

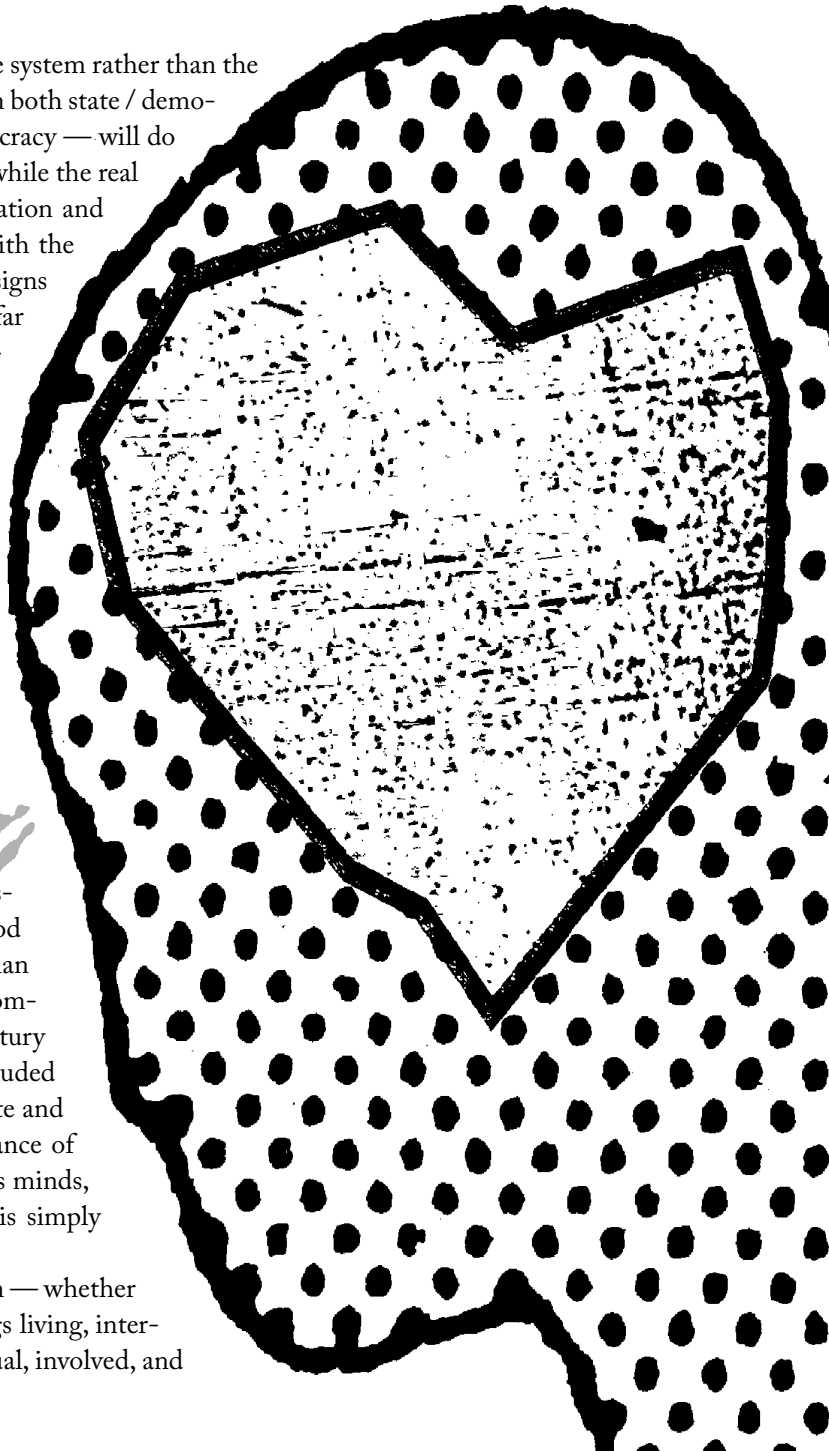
— Martin Buber

It is interesting to realise the power that graphic design holds within the current capitalist system. Corporates, and likewise, governments, have all tapped into the powerful and almost unrivalled marketing resource that is graphic design. Better By Design,[3] hand-in-hand with business interests, has marched towards a better future for consumerism. And no wonder — what other non-physical coercive technique can instil a company logo in the public and private mind as early as two years old.[4] Unchecked, the increasing role of graphic design as advertising's lackey will continue to have unreversible effect on our mental, visual and physical environment.

In 1964, and again in 2002, the concerns of above were brought forward in the form of the *First Things First* manifesto, signed by designers, photographers, artists and visual practitioners interested in steering their skills along a more viable and worthwhile path. "Unprecedented environmental, social and cultural crises demand our attention…charitable causes and other informational design projects urgently require our expertise and help." Calling for a shift in graphic design's priorities, the signatories of the manifesto recognised the potential for their skills to aid more humanitarian causes. This step, however small and tentative, towards visual 'reform' was greatly noted. But regardless of how well meaning and sincere the ideas brought forward in these documents were, it is necessary to critique their statements in more radical terms.

While proposing 'a reversal of priorities in favour of more useful, lasting, and democratic forms of communication,' the manifesto falls short in recognising any kind of tangible and radical change. The *First Things First* manifesto fails to recognise that the 'uncontested' and 'unchecked' consumerism they wish to re-direct is so ingrained in the very system we participate in, that anything short of the complete transformation of social priorities, structures and organization will never effect true social

change. Proposing the shifting of priorities within the system rather than the shifting of the system itself — as history has proven in both state / democratic socialism, and the farce of parliamentary democracy — will do nothing more than gain a few insignificant victories while the real battle goes unwaged. The fact that rampant globalisation and totalitarian corporate hegemony go hand in hand with the current system is the real issue concerned graphic designs could be questioning. "The representative system, far from being a guarantee for the people, on the contrary, creates and safeguards the continued existence of a governmental aristocracy against the people."[5] With this in mind, the following text proposes to explore the graphic designers role (if any) in revolutionary, direct action towards the transformation of society, in specifically anarchist terms.



"It is said that an anarchist society is impossible. Artistic activity is the process of realising the impossible."

— Max Blechman,
"Toward an Anarchist Aesthetic."

The basic ideas of Anarchism have been mis-informed, mis-interpreted, and mis-understood throughout its existence. Its humanistic and libertarian ideas were forever tarnished by a minority who committed violent acts around the turn of the 19th century — 'the propaganda of the deed' as it was known, included assassinations and terrorism directed towards the state and its leaders. These acts, and the anti-authoritarian stance of Anarchism have tended to, in the majority of peoples minds, associate its theories with chaos and disorder. This is simply not the case.

Anarchism, or libertarian socialism, is the concern — whether it be social, political, or historical — of human beings living, interacting, and relating in a way that is the most fair, equal, involved, and

ultimately free of any kind of exploitation — whether it be economic or political, capitalistic or communistic. "A mistaken, or more often, deliberately inaccurate interpretation alleges that the libertarian concept means the absence of all organisation. This is entirely false: it is not a matter of 'organisation' or 'nonorganisation,' but of two different principles of organisation…Of course, say the anarchists, society must be organised. However, it must be established freely, socially, and, above all, from below."[6]

The idea of non-hierarchical forms of organization are central to libertarian socialism — only through direct action and self-management will we enjoy complete emancipation in our lives and the daily decisions that they entail. These ideas are far from utopian or fruitless as those who fear its potential would lead us to believe — they are no more utopian than the thought that far-removed, parliamentary 'representatives' can intimately and effectively answer our many wants and needs as individuals and communities.

Therefore Anarchism is not a fixed, self-enclosed social system but rather a definite trend in the historic development of society, which, in contrast with the intellectual guardianship of all clerical and governmental institutions, strives for the free unhindered unfolding of all the individual and social forces in life. For anarchists, freedom is not an abstract philosophical concept, but a vital concrete possibility for every human being to bring to full development all the powers, capacities, and talents with which nature has endowed him/her, and turn them to social account. The less this natural development of people is influenced by religious or political guardianship, the more efficient and harmonious human personality will become, the more it will become the measure of the intellectual culture of the society in which it has grown.[7]

"As anarchists, we have seen our politics denigrated by other artists; as artists, we have had our cultural production attacked as frivolous by activists."

— Realising the Impossible:
Art Against Authority

It would be wrong to view this text as some kind of blueprint for anarchist design action. This is not a manifesto. Nor is it the justification for graphic design as a specialist, elitist profession to continue in its current form for the 'aid' of social change. As Proudhon wrote to Marx, "Let us not make ourselves the leaders of a new intolerance. Let us not pose as the apostles of a new religion, even if it be the religion of logic, of reason."[8] And while there is a definite place for the graphic designer in an activist role, both in an educational and provocative sense, designers must not make the mistake of becoming some kind of vanguard group of directors. Whereas Marxism is often justified in both political and academic fields in this respect — defending the role of a necessary vanguard party towards the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' — anarchism vehemently refutes

and rejects this concept. The everyday individual or anarchist design practitioner, through the basic act of joining their libertarian principals with their material production, should, and could, greatly contribute to the transformation of everyday life towards a more just and humane existence. As educator and mediator, it is the responsibility of anyone with an understanding of visual communication to instil in people's minds a broader sense of possibility, using the communicative powers of artistic imagery to encourage and enrage. It is important to shift societies' many urgent concerns from the fringes and into the public realm, in a direct and unavoidable manner. However, purely negative and angst-ridden critique can only go so far — it is the sense of positive possibilities that need to be associated with the ideas of Anarchism. The marginality of current grassroots movements must be overcome — the isolation of both activist groups and concerned individual's thoughts must be rendered public, transparent, and shared.

Mainstream media do a rather convincing job of keeping our private thoughts as seemingly isolated and illogical. It is an important task to illustrate that the critical and questioning ideas we may be having individually are, more often than not, shared as a whole, rather than letting them be diffused and disarmed by hegemonic structures and institutions such as the news, popular media, and the state. Graphic design can publicly and prolifically become the visual manifestation of these shared ideas. "Ideally, art can inspire hope, encourage critical thinking, capture emotion, and stimulate creativity. It can declare another way to think about and participate in living. Art can document or challenge history, create a framework for social change, and create a vision of a more just world. When art is used in activism it provides an appealing and accessible entry point to social issues and radical politics."[9] As the initial point of contact with more in-depth and varied forms of activism, graphic design can act as the essential catalyst for further research, involvement, and more importantly, for direct action.

Further exploration of existing and more experimental modes of production and aesthetics in design and design application can only set the basis for future non-hierarchal, organic organisation. Systems and structures raised in ones practice could essentially form patterns and guides for self organization in a more truly libertarian society. Individualism and autonomy intact, the personal process/

es of making work could lead the way in eventual liberation on a more macro level, exploring the 'unlimited perfectibility' of both personal design arrangements and social organization. "Anarchism is no patent solution for all human problems, no utopia of a perfect social order, as it has so often been called, since on principle it rejects all absolute schemes and concepts. It does not believe in any absolute truth, or in definite final goals for human development, but in an unlimited perfectibility of social arrangements and human living conditions, which are always straining after higher forms of expression…"[10] Allowing design to publicly explore and illustrate those 'higher forms of expression' can do nothing but broaden the scope and awareness of the anarchist movement as a whole. Ⓐ

1 In relation to the anarchist concept of 'no gods, no masters' — or, that the exploitation of man by man and the dominion of man over man are inseperable, and each is the condition of the other.

2 Design collectives such as The Street Art Workers, Drawing Resistance, the Beehive Collective, Paper Politics, Taring Padi, and the Prison Poster Project are just a few examples. See 'Realising the Impossible: Art Against Authority' by Josh Macphee and Erik Reuland (AK Press, 2007).

3 A government initiative aimed at helping New Zealand companies 'increase their exports and profits through the better use of design in their products and services'.
Check it out at www.betterbydesign.org.nz.

4 See 'Fast Food Nation' by Eric Schlosser (Penguin Books, 2002).

5 Michael Bakunin in 'Anarchism' by Daniel Guerin (Monthly Review Press, 1970).

6 Voline in 'Anarchism' by Daniel Guerin (Monthly Review Press, 1970).

7 Paraphrased from Rudolf Rocker's 'Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice' (AK Press, 2004).

8 From 'Anarchism' by Daniel Guerin (Monthly Review Press, 1970).

9 Colin Matthes, 'Realising the Impossible: Art Against Authority' by Josh Macphee and Erik Reuland (AK Press, 2007).

10 Rudolf Rocker, 'Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice' (AK Press, 2004).

Behind German Borders

– An interview with Miss X and Miss Y

Miss X and Miss Y are two anarchists from Aotearoa who have been living in Berlin for the last two years.

Terrorism

Virtually mirroring the police raids here in October last year, there have been a number of arrests under terrorism laws, known as 'Paragraph 129a' in Germany. Could you tell us briefly about the situation?

Paragraph 129a was created in the 1970's to fight the Red Army Faction and covers membership or support of a terrorist organisation. The law employs a very loose definition of terrorism and grants the police and state security wide powers of surveillance. Only 3% of 129a investigations in the 1990's have resulted in convictions, however the view into the left and the fear it creates makes these investigations worthwhile.

The people arrested last year are accused of being members the Militant Group (MG), which carried out arson attacks on predominantly military and government targets, such as a Jobcentre. Currently the seven people facing 129a have all had their investigations downgraded to 129, which relates to criminal conspiracy. The four people sitting in investigatory detention have all been released.



Insofar as you can discern, what has been the wider 'public' response to the arrests? Is there much scepticism, or is the official version generally accepted?

Well, of course it depends on what you mean by wider public response, which also has to be seen in a context of the raids which took place just before the G8, where the police were using tactics the Stasi also used to use (for example, taking scent samples).

One of the people arrested under the anti-terror law was a university academic (Dr Andrej H.), which was not a good public relations move for the police. Justifications for his arrest include that, for example, he had access to university libraries (!), and that phrases and keywords (ie. 'gentrification') from academic papers authored by him also appeared in communiqués. Further, he had written articles about the 'Militant Group,' which had been doing actions against gentrification. It became an issue of academic freedom.

What has been the response to helping out those arrested under 129a? Have there been anti-129a campaigns? What has been the focus, and what actions have been organised?

The anti-129a campaigns have been taking place all over Germany. On one level basic prisoner support, on another focusing on the abolishment of the law altogether, and on another challenging the growing surveillance State, which is growing more and more extreme here.

What has been the general discourse of these campaigns? There was a kind of split here over the October raids between civil rights groups who called for a more measured response from the police and even a 'fair trial,' and the more radical left who simply demanded charges to be dropped. Of course, it has been the civil rights discourse which has received the media attention. Has a similar struggle existed in Germany?

I think there has been a much harder line taken over here, which is not to say the civil rights discourse isn't there, but it's certainly not as prominent. Also, the main response from the radical left to the repres-



sion wave has not been 'they are not terrorists' but 'we are all terrorists' which is far more useful in challenging the basic premise of state power and law. It's a more offensive position than to say 'our friends are innocent – drop the charges.'

The October raids here made really explicit the barbarity of prisons, and this has precipitated some prisoner-support work, with an Anarchist Black Cross being set up here in Wellington and some of those the arrested met inside being directly supported. Presumably, with such a repressive history, many such groups already existed in Germany, but has this new wave of attacks spurred a resurgence of prisoner support work? What form does this take?

It's true Germany has had for some time now an anti-repression infrastructure; it's unfortunately essential, since the German state is well practiced at imprisonment. It's also not the first time such charges have been bought against people. There are several different anti-repression networks in Germany and numerous smaller groups which have long histories in prisoner support. For example Rote Hilfe, ABC, and ARAP (a group working specifically on prison and gender non-conformity). In Berlin there is also a legal team to call when your friends get arrested at demos, for example. And of course Out Of Action, the newest group, who deal specifically with trauma from police repression.

While the 129a attacks did spur increased prisoner support actions, so did the imprisonment of anti-fascists which occurred more recently. Pre and during the G8 there was also a big repression wave.

Prisoner support work ranges from demos outside prisons, visiting prisoners, fundraising (every second left-wing party in Berlin is a soli for anti-rep work), graffiti, setting fire to police cars, writing letters, demonstrations, exhibitions, publications …and taking action against the things the prisoners were also fighting against.

Autonomists

The German 'autonomists' greatly outnumber the anarchists in Germany. Can you tell us a bit about the autonomist movement, and how it differs from the anarchist movement in Germany?

Autonomist is a broad term that means many things to many people. It is a movement that can be traced directly back to 1968. It has a very strong sub-cultural element which is a strong advantage but also a strong disadvantage (in that it can be criticised as too alienating, inward looking and youth based). The movement is definitely a lot weaker now when compared to the 80's and early 90's.

Ideologically, autonomists are similar to many anarchists – there is a focus on direct action, 'propaganda by deed' and militance. Autonomists also tend to form together around issues rather than forming organisations that exist for the sake of themselves, waiting for something to act on. There is much more emphasis placed on building infrastructure such as social spaces, living projects and communes. This has helped to build the strong subculture.

Autonomists are also much more interested in building their own political base. There is also a lot of solidarity work, but autonomists are primarily concerned with their own liberation and not acting as activists or social workers.

In contrast, anarchists in Germany are more concerned with more 'traditional' anarchist organising, such as syndicalist union building.

The German autonomist movement has no rigid ideological line and its focuses have changed over the years – to the point where some 'old' autonomists are unhappy with people today even using the same name. You also have many younger autonomists who are embarrassed by the earlier movement, for example with anti-semitism and anti-americanism. You will also find groups defining themselves as 'post-autonomist' in critique.

In contrast to anarchists in New Zealand, the autonomist movement has been influenced by Marxist (Frankfurt School etc.) writers, such as Reich, Adorno etc., with a clear anti-hierarchy basis.

The strong anti-democratic and repressive tradition in Germany has also shaped the autonomist movement. Autonomists tend to work in small closed groups which are very difficult to infiltrate. It also makes it very hard to get involved in the political scene when you don't know anyone.

What sort of activity was occurring at the height of the autonomist movement during the 80s and early 90s? Was the peak primarily triggered by the fall of the Wall?

The big activities were anti-nuclear, which were quite militant, squatting and over environ-

mental actions such as against the destruction of forest around Frankfurt for an airport extension.

Re-unification was important in changing the autonome movement but for a few different reasons. In general, it was a period of extreme change and upheaval. It opened up new spaces, and the peak of the squatting movement came at this time – the really big squatter fights of the mid nineties in Berlin almost all took place in the former East, where almost whole streets were occupied by autonomists. But these fights with the police, from which the Black Block first emerged, also led to processes of legalisation of the houses and subsequently a de-radicalisation. People found themselves increasingly in a situation which was one of defence, and not pushing forward.

But also important was the need to respond to growing fascist movement in Germany, which reared it's head for the first significant time since WW2 when the borders between East and West Germany came down. Although there had been anti-fascist work happening before this, it was mostly in response to people who had been active in WW2, but who still had positions of power in post-war Germany. After reunification things started to get really nasty in a pressing way – there was between 1991 and 1992 a series of violent racist attacks, including pogroms against refugees homes, and murder, starting in the East, but spreading also to the West. People realised that, far from being on the edge of revolution, they were at the opposite.

How do the autonomists – in rejecting (in part) the 'activist' role, focussing on building infrastructure, and working in small groups. etc. – how do they relate with the anarchists who are focussed much more on traditional organising? What are the (interesting) points of contention?

The two movements cannot always be so easily separated. Although there are far fewer people who would identify as anarchists than autonomists, there is often not a clear line drawn. People work together, groups bleed into each other and crossover. But of course this is not to say there aren't criticisms of each other. On one side, autonomists have been criticised for not paying enough attention to theory (or having patchwork theory), and for having a lack of continuity. On the other hand, anarchists have been criticised for being stuck in tradition and not adapting to new situations, for example not giving enough focus on gender issues.

Squatting

You've been involved quite a bit with squatting in Germany. What has your experience of squatting been, and how do you feel squatting and other 'infrastructure' projects are important to the anarchist project?

Squatting hasn't existed in any public sense in Berlin for a decade, although it's still possible if done quietly. There were huge squatting waves in Berlin in the 70's Cold War wastelands of West Berlin and then in East Berlin after the fall of the wall. Hundreds of houses and entire streets were squatted. Since then most of the squatted houses have either been evicted, legalised through rent contracts or bought by



the occupiers. So it is really more accurate to speak of autonomous or free spaces rather than squats.

More than 50 autonomous spaces still exist in Berlin, many of them under threat of eviction despite the legalisation processes of the 1990's. Many of these projects are living-only spaces, but quite a few also have social spaces like bars, meeting rooms, workshops, concert spaces, 'sport' rooms and cinemas. A typical house project would have about 25 people living in the house. The free spaces play an important part in the political scene, acting like a social glue. They are spaces to organise and create in, to argue in, to de-stress after demos, to make things happen and to figure out ways of living collectively together. People also live in 'wagenplätze' (house truck squats). (Not to be confused with anything hippy at all – inner city truck squats can be extremely beautiful, more reminiscent of madmax than a gypsie fair). And there are also many projects and collectives in the countryside.

Since the fall of wall there has been an extremely aggressive transformation of Berlin into a cosmopolitan 'creative' city. Entire neighbourhoods are being gentrified. Poor people are pushed out to the outskirts of the city and areas of wasteland occupied by trucks-quatters are being turned into office blocks and luxury apartments. Many social spaces are acutely threatened through gentrification and are fighting not only for their own spaces and houses but also their neighbourhoods.

The Queer Scene

Gender queer activities seem quite popular in Germany, and I've seen quite a bit of printed materials that are challenging gender boundaries/norms, sexism, and so on. Could you tell us what the motivations are behind this, and how the movement(s) is organised, and how it relates to other radical politics?

The Queer scene in the radical left is quite a big influence on the left scene in general, and there are several house projects and wagenplätze in Berlin where only women-lesbian-transgender people live. Likewise there is also 'tuntenhaus' (literally 'fag/queen house'), a house project open to queer men.

There is also a strong sex-positive element in the left queer scene – from Multisexual parties in squat bars (queer punk!) to (informal) make-out parties after scream-core concerts in the basement of social spaces.

The queer scene has been responsible for changing many people's opinions around sex and pornography, to the extent that there is now an annual feminist porn festival in Berlin with many people from the radical left submitting DIY queer films.

There is a strong emphasis on destroying traditional notions of gender binaries, based on ideas that gender is a performance not tied to sex, and that you can change it at will.

In contrast to the mainstream gay and lesbian scene in Berlin (who let gay and lesbian police officers lead the most recent pride march), the radical queer scene is not contained in itself but connected to many different struggles – squatting, anti-racist work, anti-deportation etc. And it's hard to separate anti-sexist work in the radical left from pro-queer work.

We didn't really answer your question about the motivations, but we see this as self evident in you question :-) We are not really sure about why there is a such a strong queer scene in Germany – society is not so different to that in New Zealand. Perhaps it is the continuation of the sexual revolution in Germany, which was huge compared to other countries in Europe. Ⓐ



Dangerous Foundations

An argument against the 'Identity' in Identity Politics

– Torrance

This is an argument against identity politics, but it is not an argument against feminism, or queer liberation, or anti-racism work. It is instead an argument that the oppressions usually combated through identity politics – a strategy based on the affirmation of Identity – could be better fought through its abandonment, or in the least through a radical destabilisation of existing Identities.

I believe that Identity – always mythical and invented – is in itself oppressive, and that a politics founded upon one or another particular Identity is a dangerous strategy. These dangers are numerous, and include: the creation and policing of arbitrary boundaries of Identity, rigorous essentialism, the intensification of the norms associated with the Identity, the suppression and homogenisation of difference within, and the failure to recognise commonalities across boundaries of Identity.

In line with Judith Butler and Donna Haraway, I want to suggest that a politics of affinity, rather than Identity, has vastly more potential to transform the myriad of oppressive relations that we are subject to, and participate in, every day. And though this essay is primarily argued through the lens of the sex/gender/desire matrix, the implications for other struggles based around Identity are thoroughly implied.

The 'Identity' of identity politics requires some investigation. It isn't the more mundane aspects of our identity such as our name, our age, or perhaps the car we drive, though all of these could become the basis for capital-'I' Identity. Rather, the idea of Identity used here includes sex/gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, nationalism, sometimes class (when it defines who one 'is') or even political allegiances ('anarchist' included). Identity in this sense is an extrapolation from some personal aspect of our selves – parts of our body, our desires, beliefs, etc. – to a social category. In turn, being a member of such a social category is deemed to say something important about ourselves. One boy being attracted to another boy, for example, is one desire among the thousands of everyday desires we have. But in contemporary society, this desire becomes something much bigger: it locates the boy in a social category,

that of the 'homosexual' (and, thus, not a heterosexual), which then implies a number of things about the boy, a number of essential qualities. Perhaps he is a sissy, or artistic, likes shopping, or any other number of homosexual stereotypes.

It says something else too: in being homosexual, the boy becomes located within a social hierarchy. He is lesser than heterosexuals, perhaps on par with bisexuals (or perhaps, as half-bloods, they are lower still?), and no doubt above transsexuals. Identity is essential to these sorts of hierarchies. Racism, sexism, compulsory heterosexuality, and so on, require that an otherwise unique individual become Identified, given an appropriate placing within the various hierarchies of Identity, and treated in accordance with the value, traits and norms associated with that Identity. Those Identities deemed of highest value are usually considered normal, and deviations beyond its boundaries are considered lesser and subservient, or sometimes even abhorrent (and in need of rectification).

Despite this hierarchy, the different identities actually *need* each other to make sense: the heterosexual only makes sense in relation to the homosexual, defined as its opposite, its relational 'other,' and likewise man and woman only remain stable categories of identity when they have each other to be defined against: I am a woman because I have a vagina which a man does not have.

In being the basis for founding much of our behaviour, and our conceptions of the world and each other, these identity categories need a certain solidity, a foundation from which they can be asserted. And, obviously, simply being relational to one another doesn't provide this foundation. Identities are therefore deemed as natural, as biological or god-given. In having a penis one joins the identity group of 'men,' being like them in several very important ways, and exercising the power attributed to them; and that this is *natural* therefore puts it beyond question. The fact that these identities constantly change in meaning or are simply invented, that the homosexual identity, for example, was only invented in the last decade of the nineteenth century, must therefore be forgotten or else history rewritten.

Identity works in two ways. It firstly locates someone within a social category, and thus within a particular hierarchy: it shapes how people relate to one another. In this operation, social identities are applied to ourselves from an external source, and we are judged and treated accordingly. What is more insidious, however, is when identity categories become internalised. They become standards to which we aspire, and we seek to take on and enact these categories based on what we consider to be their essential qualities. And so in being located as a man one becomes attributed the power granted to the social category of men (in those situations where this power is recognised, that is), but one also becomes subject to the norms of masculinity. To be a man, one must constantly act as a man, must properly perform their masculinity, and re-establish their identity in new situations. Identity, therefore, is a prescription; it defines how people should act.

And it is a cause of much pain when people who are identified as a particular identity fail to perform that identity properly: they must constantly monitor their movements, their speech, their interests, and so on, or else face retribution from those around them. In properly performing their identity, however, they simultaneously recreate the norms associated with that identity, subtly but effectively policing the boundaries of the category. And of course, people can, and often do, police the boundaries of identity much more explicitly in employing a continuum of violence, from non-verbal and symbolic gestures of disapproval, verbal taunting, social isolation, physical violence and even death.

It's a peculiar thing that most all of the movements seeking to overcome identity-based hierarchies have sought not to dismantle the founding identity, but have instead asserted it ever more strongly, demanding *equality* of identities. This is identity politics, and it has been the dominant method of approaching these struggles for well over 200 years.

The Identity part of identity politics has such appeal partly as a result of the 'existential solidity' Identity provides. Or, put differently, it gives us a concrete foundation for our place in the world, our position within the natural order of things. It helps put to rest any number of niggling questions about 'who we *really* are.'

The dominance of identity politics itself is no doubt in part because there is a very real sense of solidarity to be found amongst people subject to a similar experience. In coming together, and in realising that individual experiences are shared across a number of people, there is a great sense of strength to be gained. One of the first moves I made in coming to terms with my obviously deviant sexual desires was to seek out and talk to other guys my age, who had come out or were coming out, to share stories and learn survival strategies from one another, and to simply provide support. Building a political strategy upon these linkages isn't such a leap.

There is possibly a second reason for its dominance as a strategy, in that it is particularly well suited to liberal politicking. The liberal paradigm of equal rights before the State requires, firstly, *recognition* before the State. This cannot be achieved without a well-defined 'special interest' or lobby group,





whose boundaries are clearly delineated, and with leaders or organisations that can speak on behalf of the group, that can *represent* it before the State. Within this liberal logic of recognition and representation, Identity therefore becomes the bedrock upon which it is based, and it is not politically sensible to question this foundation.

In any case, identity politics has dominated, based upon the familiar strategy of oppressed identity groups asserting their Identity, demonstrating the common condition of oppression and the unity across that Identity, and demanding equality alongside other Identities.

So what is wrong with identity politics? How could it possibly be dangerous? I want to use Judith Butler's 'matrix' of sex/gender/desire to make my points here. In this matrix, sex and gender are separated in the classic (but problematic) division between the biological body (sex) and the social/cultural body (gender). The French feminist Simone de Beauvoir's famous line from *The Second Sex* makes this separation quite succinct: 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.' Gender in this sense is the identity given to the biological body, including the prescriptions and norms given to specific bodies, the knowledge about those bodies, and so on. Desire is the last aspect of this matrix and describes sexual desire, whether for men or women, young or old, or any other number of sexual desires. The only two truly accepted sex/gender/desire matrices are male/man/hetero and female/woman/hetero. Jumbled matrices are obviously of a lesser status, and matrices which cannot be clearly described, such as hermaphrodite/neither masculine nor feminine/asexual, are abhorrent, or 'abject.' Drawing upon this framework, I want to try and illustrate some of the dangers of identity politics.

Identity politics reinforces (binary) divisions and is essentialist. In choosing not to transcend, but rather found their politics upon the boundaries of existing identity formations, identity politics tends to reinforce these divisions. Defining and redefining the nature of the identity upon which these strategies are founded results in a policing of the borders of that identity, and this often takes the form of controversies about where precisely the boundaries lie (are transgendered men to be considered alongside women? are bisexuals our allies or sexual traitors? etc.).

The unproblematic use of the identity categories of men/women and heterosexual/homosexual gives these categories a new life; it treats the categories as natural or biological, thus hiding their 'invented' nature. In doing so, the use of these categories engages in an often rigorous essentialism, entertaining the idea that there are indeed universal and ahistorical properties associated with sex, gender and sexuality, for example. This is particularly strange given the widespread feminist concern with detaching gender from sex. Judith Butler has commented that this separation should have radically destabilised the binary categories of gender, creating a proliferation of gender scripts (since male ≠ man, and female ≠ woman), but instead gender is talked about in the very same terms as sex, where gender and sex become one and the same again (and never mind that biological sex is itself not dualistic).[1] The same applies to the use of homosexual and heterosexual categories. Rather than seeking to reveal the multiplicity of desires within each of us that certainly transcend these categories, 'gay pride,' for example, has revelled in its distinct and separate identity to heterosexual culture.

Identity politics further entrenches individuals under the respective regime of identity. In calling upon individuals to embrace a particular identity, the individual either enters for the first time the regime of norms associated with that identity, or else has the norms brought upon them with renewed strength. Engaging in homosexual relations, for example, did not necessarily make one a homosexual prior to the gay rights movement (and still does not, of course). In the rise of homosexual identity politics, however, large numbers of people were called upon to 'come out' and be proud of being gay, to embrace the homosexual identity. Those who came to identify as gay found themselves brought under the norms of gay identity; they became subject to the homosexual discursive regime, and the stronger the insistence upon this identity, the stronger its norms came to bear.

When people don't fit with these norms – for example, are hopeless at artistic endeavours, aren't beautiful and slim, are macho, or are not hopelessly intrigued by shopping – the gay identity becomes either strongly alienating or, more commonly, works so as to transform them according to those very expectations. My personal experience of first identifying as gay and watching TV shows like *Will and Grace* was one of alienation (and disgust), followed by an attempt to bring myself into line with those expectations.

The assertion of identity within the gay rights movement also had the effect of creating an entirely new commercial market, where a large group of otherwise disparate people could now be collectively called upon through advertising to buy or partake in a variety of gay-oriented commodities and services. This was a similar operation to that of homosexual norms.

Identity politics homogenises and overrides difference within. In asserting a commonality across an identity, those that fall outside these descriptions have their voices silenced and actual differences are suppressed. This is especially true of identity politics when it engages in representation, where individuals or organisations who presume that their experiences

1 'If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way. Taken to its logical limit, the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders' (Judith Butler, 2006: 9).

are generalisable speak on behalf of all members of that particular identity. The dominant versions of second-wave feminism, for example, were regularly opposed from the 1960s up until the 1990s first by working class women whose experiences were altogether different to the then-dominant middle class feminists, then by black women, lesbian women, transsexual women, and a number of other intersections of identities and experiences. Another way of saying this is that identity politics often imposes a unity upon what are clearly divergent experiences.[2]

The dominant articulation of a particular identity not only silences those who fall outside its parameters, but also works to create new norms of identity. It was not just in watching *Will and Grace* that I came under the norms of homosexual identity, but also in the dominant voices of homosexual organisations, in the voices of 'my own people.' The media that they produced, the 'help guides,' and the stories that they told, had a much bigger effect than heterosexual media on creating the standards to which I believed I had to aspire. This was a form of internal control and regulation, though it was internal only with respect to the arbitrary boundaries of homosexual identity.

Identity politics reduces 'internal' power plays to secondary concern. This is very closely related to the last issue, because of course those *doing* the silencing were precisely those who were higher in other hierarchies, whether straight, white or upper/middle-class, for example. There is a very real and justifiable fear that these internal differences and hierarchies will shatter the supposed commonality of experience given to an identity. Therefore, equality is often sought first and foremost for the primary identity, and intra-identity hierarchies are suppressed for the sake of unity, to be dealt with as a secondary concern (such as at the annual conference). It thus encourages a piecemeal approach, ignoring that concrete relations of oppression and domination are experienced within a single field of experience.

Identity politics masks commonalities that transcend the boundaries of identity. Identity politics often frames oppression as singularly and uniquely experienced by one particular identity to which others, at most, can act as allies. This masks the shared interests some within an identity category may share with others designated beyond its boundaries. Gay rights, for example, frames homosexual oppression as something only experienced by homosexuals. But what of the sissy boy who fails to live up to the norms of masculinity, who may in fact be largely heterosexual in desire but nonetheless gets pounded into school walls and jeered as a faggot? The same sex/gender/desire

2 'These domains of exclusion reveal the coercive and regulatory consequences of that construction, even when that construction has been elaborated for emancipatory purposes. Indeed, the fragmentation within feminism and the paradoxical opposition to feminism of "women" whom feminism claims to represent suggest the necessary limits of identity politics' (Judith Butler, 2006: 6).

regime is clearly at play, but the closed boundaries of homosexual/heterosexual identity mask and obscure this commonality.

Identity politics often encourages limited models of power. It frames power as 'them' versus 'us,' as one identity group dominating another. Heterosexuals oppress homosexuals, men oppress women, sex-dominants oppress intersex/non-sex people. As a *general* description this is often true, but by itself it misses at least two further aspects. It misses how power is also created bottom-up, which is to say there are generalised practices that occur *across* identities that re-create norms and further entrench identity formations. Where, for example, do the norms of masculinity and femininity come from? who polices their boundaries? who exercises violence when norms are broken? The production of these norms and their maintenance cannot be reduced to one group, not even in a general way.

The second aspect often overlooked in identity politics is when the general oppressor/oppressed relation becomes conceived as a hard-and-fast rule, a totalising form of power where all relationships are re-coded in this way. When, at the concrete and everyday level, these relations are reversed or otherwise broken, identity politics often tends to treat them as anomalies, and thus sidelines the experience completely.

These problems around founding a political strategy upon identity have been well known within feminist and queer theory for some time. The fear was that, without asserting a central point of commonality and unity in Identity, there was no other way to continue the feminist/queer project. And so the notion of 'strategic essentialism' was developed, which posed a project based around 'womanhood,' for example, which was conscious of its mythical founding principle, but which used it nonetheless as a necessary point of unity. While strategic in its intention, the project rapidly digressed towards explicit essentialism only to be renounced by one of its original theorists, Gayatri Spivak.

Can we imagine a politics against Identity-based oppression that is not itself founded upon Identity? But if not Identity, around what do we come together? One answer to this has been what has been called a 'politics of affinity.' A 'politics of affinity' is politics that seeks cooperation between people based upon similarities in political project, in vision, and in methods. It is a series of associations formed not upon who we are today, but based on how we desire to change and what we desire to effect, whether that be a dismantling of gender scripts, the creation of practices that encourage egalitarian relations, and so on. This is therefore not a ***project founded upon existing categories of Identity,*** **but instead**

'marks out a self-consciously constructed space that cannot affirm the capacity to act on the basis of natural identification, ***but only on the basis of conscious coalition, of affinity, of political kinship***'
(Donna Haraway, 1991: 156).

A politics of affinity seeks to abandon Identity as its founding principle, and seeks in its methods not to maintain and reinscribe the boundaries of Identity. It does not, however, pretend Identity doesn't exist. Indeed, Identity is so thoroughly pervasive that it is difficult to imagine a politics without it. A politics of affinity therefore embodies at least two moments. The first moment is a recognition and

interrogation of existing categories of Identity, their boundaries, their essential properties, their myths of legitimacy, and the mechanisms through which they are deployed so as to create oppressive relations. In doing this, it also seeks to destabilise them: it is necessary to show the boundaries as arbitrary and overflowing, the myths of legitimacy as false, and to describe the changing history of how those Identities have been understood or created.

This second moment involves a process of 'disidentification,' which is both a rejection of existing categories of Identity *as a lived practice*, and necessarily the creation of new performances, new scripts, perhaps even new Identities (to be abandoned and undermined the moment they take hold). Identities maintain their grasp only partially through ideas; the more substantial component to Identity maintenance is in the practices and performances of our everyday lives. The rejection of Identity therefore means the rejection and concomitant creation of new ways of *living*. It means behaving differently, trampling scripts of Identity (and not simply inversing them either) and creating ourselves anew with one another through collective experiments. These experiments in living must seek to confront existing practices of domination, but they also allow for a positive conception of freedom not possible within identity politics: the creation of practices that further extend the possibilities of living for everyone.

In doing so, in seeking to spread a project of disidentification, the hope is that the foundations for Identity-based oppressions will be undermined, and new egalitarian practices developed in their stead. Judith Butler has ironically suggested that more might be achieved by searching for points of disidentification than identification, and that in this process a politics of affinity, and not identity, may be forged.

> A politics of affinity… is about abandoning the fantasy that fixed, stable identities are possible and desirable, that one identity is better than another, that superior identities deserve more of the good and less of the bad that a social order has to offer, and that the state form should act as the arbiter of who gets what (Richard Day, 2005: 188)

References and recommended reading:

Donna Haraway (1991). A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century. In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (pp.149-181). New York: Routledge.

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Judith Butler (2006). *Gender Trouble.* London & New York: Routledge. (Skip section two, unless you're a big fun of Luce Irigaray and Monique Wittig.)

Richard Day (2005). *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist currents in the newest social movements.* London: Pluto Press.

letters (and early praise)

Since this is our first issue in three years, we don't have any letters... but, we do have some early praise for this issue from everyone's favourite authoritative source of opinions – Indymedia – including such gems as:

> ...pretentious e.g. "delves deeper into the anarchist project," "an intelligent yet accessible interrogation." By and for academics?
> – Anonymous, 15th January 2008

> Wankers.
> – Anonymous, 14th January 2008

> Absolute bollocks. Fails to properly account for the dialectical forces of history and the revolutionary subject in the industrial proletariat. Mere utopian socialism.
> – Vulgar Marxism, c.mid19th Century - Today

Letters for the next issue are welcome, preferably below 500 words. They may be edited for clarity and size. Please consider writing a response article if significantly longer than the word limit. All letters to info@rebelpress.org.nz.